Liverpool Hope University
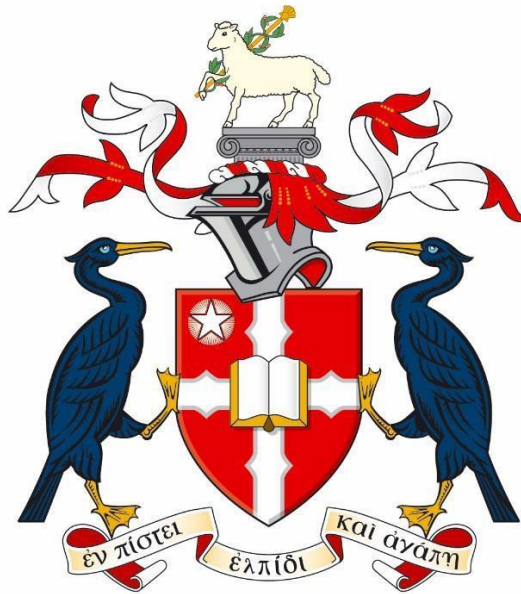

Academic Quality Handbook 4 (QH4):

Review of Existing Courses

March 2023 version

Document Control

Responsibility for Policy:	Deputy Vice Chancellor & Provost
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EIA:	

1. Core Stages in the Review Process

Reviewing existing provision is a fundamental part of the Quality and Enhancement process at Hope to ensure that threshold academic standards are being maintained, and that the course provides a positive student experience and remains fit for purpose. Course Reviews take place as necessary when identified by School/Department Academic Committees. Normally the period between reviews of the curriculum would not be greater than five years and may be sooner if concerns are raised regarding the provision.

The review of all courses at Hope involves three core stages. All courses are reviewed using a process that includes these three stages although the detail of that process at each stage varies, depending on the nature of the provision and its audience.

Stage 1: Course Evaluation reflected in annual School/Departmental Evaluations,
Stage 2: Annual review as part of the ARE process,
Stage 3: Course review through a co-design event [Type R].

STAGE 1: COURSE EVALUATION
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STAGE 2: ANNUAL REVIEW AS PART OF THE ARE PROCESS

STAGE 3: FIVE-YEARLY REVIEW VIA TYPE R CO-DESIGN EVENT

This document (QH4) describes the process for **review of existing courses leading to awards of the University**.

Stage 1: Course Evaluation

Liverpool Hope seeks to work in partnership with our students to offer them the best possible student experience. We seek to do this in dialogue, staff being responsive and empathetic to students' needs, whilst giving them the opportunity to flourish in a challenging academic environment.

Our Corporate Plan states that 'Hope is committed to being a fellowship in which students and staff work closely together, enjoying the benefits of a University environment in which we know one another and engage on a daily basis in discussion and debate'.

The University surveys the experience of all students each academic year. Level H students are surveyed early in December and Levels C and I in March. Students studying for Level 4, 30 credit Micro-Credential courses are surveyed at the end of the course[1]. Evaluations also take place for Level F (Foundation Year) and Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students. Level F are normally in February and PGT are in December and March. Feedback on the outcomes is given verbally in classes ideally the week following the survey and is also made available in written form on Moodle. Reflection on the outcomes of these surveys also forms part of the annual monitoring process in each School/Department. The outcomes of the surveys are also considered by both School and University Academic Committee.

In addition, the University takes part annually (February to April) in the National Student Survey (NSS). Following publication of the results in August the outcomes are considered at School/Departmental level and by the meeting of HOS/Ds. The University Academic Committee also considers the outcomes at its first full meeting of the year to reflect on University Level issues; as does the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee with a view to ensuring that any significant differences in responses of specific cohorts are addressed. Each School/Department is required to have an NSS action plan.

The most important consideration is that every student has the opportunity and is encouraged to provide feedback on their experience while studying at Hope. The range of opportunities described above and the flexibility of mechanisms which operate both through the Students Union (SU) and directly with the University mean that students have a choice in the way they make their voice heard. They can also expect to receive a response on issues they raise within a reasonable time. For some issues, where it would be beneficial for the student body to be aware of the issue and the feedback from the University, mechanisms are available both physically and online to do this effectively.

Stage 2: Annual Review and Enhancement

The University requires all undergraduate and taught postgraduate courses to be monitored annually. School/Departments are responsible for the design, delivery, and assessment of courses and courses, and responsibility for such monitoring rests with Heads of School/Department. The Annual Review and Enhancement (ARE) report is a key part of the University's quality assurance and enhancement framework. It provides an opportunity for review, reflection, and evaluation of the delivery of a course and the performance of students and allows the University to fulfil its responsibilities for maintaining the standards of its awards.

The aim of the ARE in accordance with the QAA Quality Code, is to examine the effectiveness of our courses:

- to ensure that they remain current and valid in light of developing knowledge in the discipline, and practice in its application.

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[1] Micro-credentials may have more than one intake per academic year, as such, the survey dates will vary depending on the start date of each course.

- to evaluate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes are being attained by students.
- to evaluate the continuing effectiveness of the curriculum and of assessment in relation to the intended learning outcomes.
- to ensure that recommendations for appropriate actions are followed up to remedy any identified shortcomings, and
- to monitor and review the student experience.

All ARE reports are completed via an online portal, considered by School Academic Committee and reported to the University Academic Committee.

Stage 3: Course Review through Co-Design [Type R]

For all existing courses leading to an award of the University each subject team is required to undertake a review of the provision, at a time determined by the School/Department Academic Committee, to ensure that the curriculum and syllabus are still appropriate for the current teaching and research expertise within the School/ Department. Normally the spacing of these full reviews would not be more than 5 years. The extent of this process may vary depending on the amount of new provision to be created or developed as part of the review.

All courses should follow the Type R co-design review process (see Appendix 1 for the full step-by-step process flowchart). Please note, occasionally, USET may recommend a more thorough revalidation via a 'light touch' co-design event.

The Type R co-design event itself is designed to stimulate innovation and creativity and is structured around a creative activity or discussion that will provide the context for the collaborative review of the curriculum syllabus, assessment, and student experience. To best facilitate the generation of creative ideas, the Chair, Subject Leader, and Academic Quality Officer (AQO) will attend a pre-meeting prior to the main event to establish the core framework and design of the Curriculum with close consideration of National and Subject benchmarks, and Professional Bodies (as required). The responsibility for the progress of this process is with the host School/Department of the developing curriculum in liaison with the AQO.

In the first instance, the Subject Team is required to create new course specifications documents for each course undergoing review via the online Course Proposal and Approval system. The new course specifications will need to be approved by USET <u>before</u> a review date can be scheduled. Once approved, a review date can be proposed by the subject team in liaison with the UEM and confirmed by the AQO. Once a date has been confirmed, the AQO will create a participant list that should be completed at least six weeks prior to the event.

The co-design participants should include:
- the Head of School/Department (HoS/D).
- the full teaching team.
- a representative from Careers and Employability, the Subject Librarian, and a member

of the External Relations team.
- at least one other internal academic from another School/Department.
- at least one recent graduate and current students from each level.
- <u>At least two senior academics</u> (including one from a similar course at another UK HEI) and <u>at least one industry professional</u> (if required by the subject).
- <u>The University Accreditations Officer (as appropriate for Professionally Accredited Courses).</u>
- <u>Representatives from Accrediting Bodies (as appropriate for Professionally Accredited Courses).</u>

Once completed, the AQO sends the list to the Deputy Vice Chancellor for USET approval. All proposed participants must be approved by USET <u>before</u> any invitations can be sent to external participants. AQO will manage invitations to the co-design event, based on information supplied by the School/Department.

Schedule

Normally, a Type R Co-design review event should be expected to last for half a working day. A typical schedule is as follows, although this is subject to change dependent on the nature of provision being proposed:

10:00 - 10:15 am: Welcome, Introductions and Agenda.
10.15 - 10.30 am: Brief overview by the HoS/Subject Lead.
10:30 - 11:00 am: Groups - Creative Activity/Discussion.
11:00 - 11:45 am: Applying outcomes to Curriculum Design.
11:45 - 12:00 pm: Break.
12:00 - 12:30 pm: Groups - Identification of priorities for the curriculum /syllabus (in light of key considerations outlined in the Academic Quality Handbooks QH3 and QH5).
12:30 am - 1:30 pm: Discussion of outcomes from Groups and debrief.

The subject team is expected to be present for the full event, external colleagues and those from the wider University may not be required to stay for the full event. This is at the discretion of the chair.

Key Considerations

Co-design review teams are expected to consider that the reviewed course:

- reflects the 10 principles of the University's Learning, Teaching and Enhancement strategy (including guidance on the Hope Curriculum and Syllabus).
- is designed in accordance with the appropriate level within the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).
- meets the national subject benchmark statements (and, as appropriate, requirements of PSRBs and of industry/employers).
- addresses appropriately the concept of progression to ensure that the curriculum imposes an increasing level of demand on the learner during the course.
- has an appropriate balance of content, for example, in relation to academic and practical elements, personal development and academic outcomes, breadth and depth in the

curriculum and in the forms of assessment used.

- is coherent and that the overall experience of a student has a logic and an intellectual integrity related to clearly defined learning outcomes.
- makes reference to the principles of <u>inclusive curriculum design</u> and the need to reflect the recommendations for education providers in the Equality Act 2010 .
- meets internal reference points, such as <u>University Regulations</u>.
- has had student input into its design and the development.
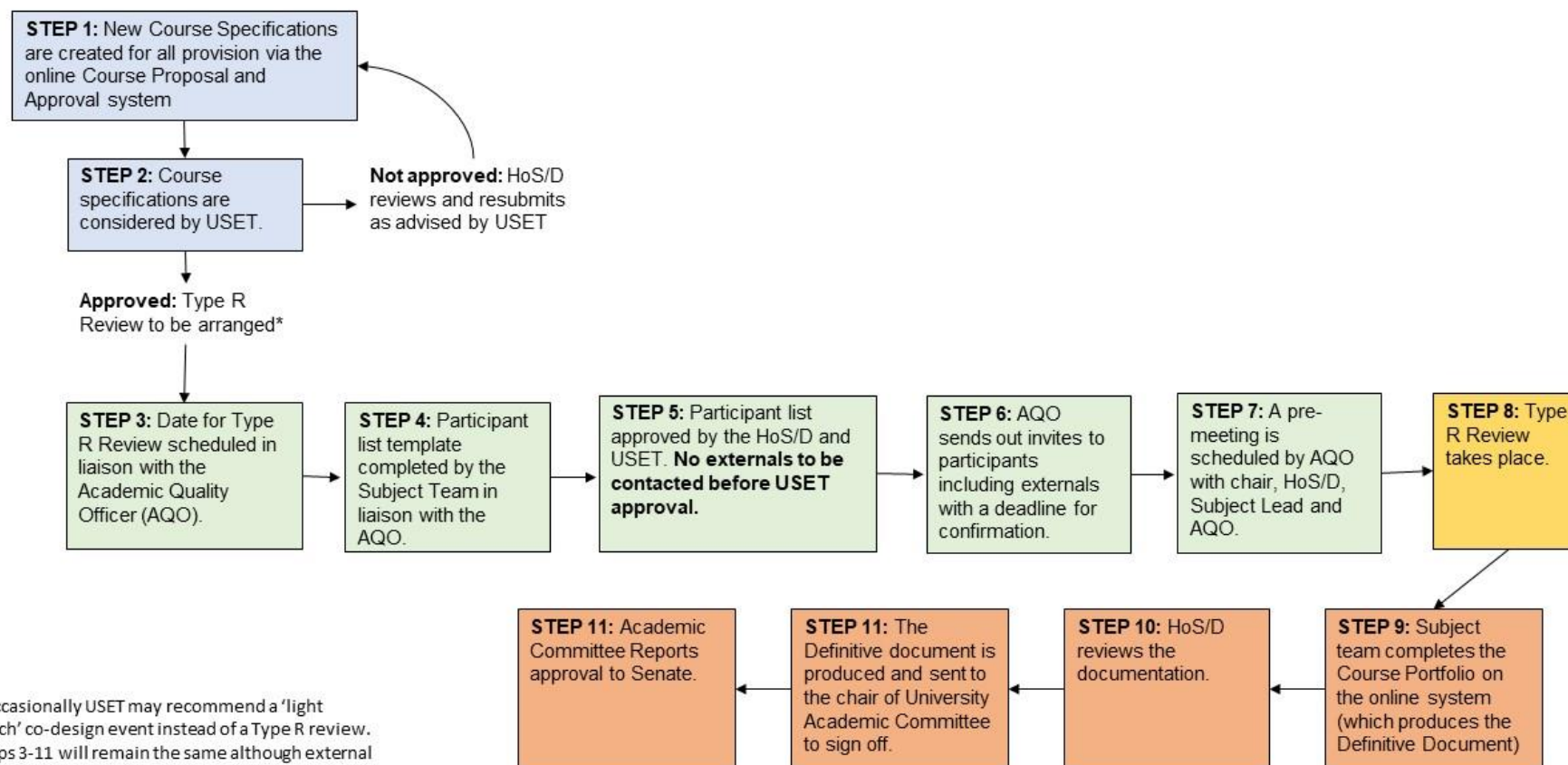- has career opportunities (and further study) articulated in its design.

The Head of School/Department takes responsibility for the event, which is facilitated by the nominated chair. Discussion will focus primarily on the content of the course and may focus on matters such as employability, recruitment, assessment, progression, placements (where applicable), student engagement and decolonising the curriculum. The focus for discussion is confirmed at a pre-meeting with the chair, HoS/D and/or Subject Lead and the AQO that take place prior to the review event. The role of facilitation is an essential component of a successful co-design event as facilitators provide ways for people to engage with each other as well as providing ways to communicate, be creative, share insights and test out new ideas.

Post-codesign Process

All outputs from the co-design event should be used by the Subject Leader in the development and enhancement of the provision. Following the review, a new Course Portfolio should be created via the online Course Proposal and Approval system, which is reviewed and signed off by the HoS/D. A new definitive document (created as part of the new Course Portfolio) must be created and approved by the chair of the University Academic Committee who reports approval to Senate (see Appendix 1 for full process).

Please note, External Reviewers are not required following a Type R review unless recommended by USET.

Appendix 1: Type R Review Process

STEP 1: New Course Specifications are created for all provision via the online Course Proposal and Approval system

STEP 2: Course specifications are considered by USET.

Not approved: HoS/D reviews and resubmits as advised by USET

Approved: Type R Review to be arranged*

STEP 3: Date for Type R Review scheduled in liaison with the Academic Quality Officer (AQO).

STEP 4: Participant list template completed by the Subject Team in liaison with the AQO.

STEP 5: Participant list approved by the HoS/D and USET. **No externals to be contacted before USET approval.**

STEP 6: AQO sends out invites to participants including externals with a deadline for confirmation.

STEP 7: A pre-meeting is scheduled by AQO with chair, HoS/D, Subject Lead and AQO.

STEP 8: Type R Review takes place.

STEP 11: Academic Committee Reports approval to Senate.

STEP 11: The Definitive document is produced and sent to the chair of University Academic Committee to sign off.

STEP 10: HoS/D reviews the documentation.

STEP 9: Subject team completes the Course Portfolio on the online system (which produces the Definitive Document)

*Occasionally USET may recommend a 'light touch' co-design event instead of a Type R review. Steps 3-11 will remain the same although external reviewers may be required (confirmed by USET).