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GBS Definitive Programme Documentation Policy

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Approved by (Oversight committee)	Board of Directors
Policy lead (Staff member accountable)	Director of Academic Standards and Quality
Date of original approval	September 2024 (Academic Board)
Date of last review	January 2025
Changes made at the last review	<p>Additional detail to provide clarification of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • process to disseminate definitive programme documentation for new programmes (section 4) and existing programmes (section 5); • programme suspension and closure (section 5); • responsibilities for providing PSRB information for Discover Uni purposes (section 6); • annual confirmation of DPD information. <p>Reference to programme committees checking the accuracy of definitive programme documentation has been deleted: clarified that this is the responsibility of the Academic Standards and Quality Office.</p>
Date effective from	January 2025
Date of next review	September 2026

Related GBS policies

- GBS Policy Framework
- Academic Standards and Quality Manual
- External Information Policy

External Reference Points

1. QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2024 - [UK Quality Code \(qaa.ac.uk\)](https://www.qaa.ac.uk) accessed June 2024
2. OfS general ongoing Conditions of Registration [Conditions of registration - Office for Students](#) accessed June 2024

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1. Scope

- 1.1. This policy outlines the approach adopted by GBS to meet its responsibility for managing its academic infrastructure and regulatory expectations for maintaining information about programmes.

2. Aims

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to outline GBS' approach to managing Definitive Programme Documentation (DPD) for formal approval activity and throughout all delivery stages and the appropriate retention period. This policy applies to staff and students who are involved in programme design, development and approval processes, modifications and periodic reviews. It also covers the operational aspects of delivery, systems preparation and modifications.
- 2.2. This policy covers all taught programmes including those that are delivered with Pearson.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. GBS considers that a set of Definitive Programme Documentation is considered definitive after final approval by the Chair of Academic Board, and following any awarding partner approval as necessary.
- 3.2. The GBS set of Definitive Programme Documentation must include:
 - 3.2.1. **Programme Specifications:** Programme Specifications are required for all programmes using the GBS template. Approved Programme Specifications summarise the main features of the programme providing clear statements of: programme final award title, indicating level and total credit using the Further and Higher Educational Qualification Framework (FHEQ); any interim awards and their credit requirements and volumes; Awarding body; Teaching Delivery body; GBS Faculty; proposed locations for delivery; Mode of study; duration of programme; External Reference points (Subject Benchmark Statements); PSRB Accreditation; UCAS Code; Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI); academic educational group HECoS Code; Recognition of Prior Learning; Entry Requirements; Programme overview; Programme aims, Programme Learning Outcomes (Knowledge and

Understanding, Cognitive intellectual skills, Transferable skills, Subject-specific practical skills); Teaching, learning, and assessment strategy and methods; Careers and Employability; Work based learning and placement opportunities; Programme Structure; version control; Module map against Programme Learning Outcomes.

- 3.2.2. **Module/Unit Specifications:** Module/Unit specifications are required for all modules/units using the GBS template. The Module/Unit Specification indicates a clear statement of the module title; the GBS defined Module code; the programmes the Module is approved for use on; The status of the module in the programme (core or optional), the level of the module using the FHEQ; the volume of credit; mode of delivery; its proposed teaching period for sequencing; teaching delivery accommodation; proposed locations for delivery; Module pre-requisites; academic educational group (HECoS) code; Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI); Indicative content; Module/unit aims, Module/unit learning outcomes, Learning and Teaching Strategy; Inclusivity; Work related/ based learning opportunities (placements); Assessment strategy(s); Student contact and independent study hours; Description of Assessment (formative and summative); Additional student's costs; Reading List / Resources (Essential and Further reading); Responsibilities and Contacts; Version control.

4. Programme Approvals: Production of Definitive Programme Documents

- 4.1. The Academic Standards and Quality Office (ASQO) produces an Outcomes Report following GBS Programme Approvals, Modifications and Periodic Reviews where a list of conditions and recommendations are set with timescales for the faculty to act upon. Once conditions and recommendations are addressed and approved by the Chair of Academic Board, the Definitive Programme Documentation provided as part of that document set and signed off by the Chair of Academic Board is confirmed. Any DPD changes required by Academic Board in its review of this documentation are signed off by the Chair of Academic Board.
- 4.2. Following approval, the Definitive Programme Documentation must be presented to the Academic Standards and Quality Office which holds and maintains these

documents in the DPD directory¹. The directory is updated and maintains the internal and awarding body's approval date, date of first delivery and the review period for each DPD set. The DPD Directory is the 'single source of truth' for Definitive Programme Documentation.

4.3. Once the Definitive Programme Documentation receives final approval, the Director of Academic Standards and Quality authorises issuing of the DPD to the following senior staff who are responsible for updating systems/information sources as listed:

- Academic Registrar (Thesis and for admissions purposes)
- Head of Marketing (GBS website)
- Head of Timetabling (Zoho)
- Head of Learning Resources and Technology (Moodle)
- Faculty Dean (Programme and module handbooks)
- Director of HR (Life)

The DPD is also issued for information to:

- Head of Data and Information
- Head Librarian

5. Changes to existing programmes

5.1 Programme Modification

5.1.1 In line with the Academic Standards and Quality Manual, programme modification processes are managed internally and considered and approved by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee before submission to the relevant awarding body. Minor modifications are undertaken and approved by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee, whilst major modifications are considered initially by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee, before being recommended for approval by Academic Board. Should the Academic Standards and Quality Committee or Academic Board require revisions to the modifications, these are completed and submitted to the Committee or Board, as relevant, for final approval. Once internal approval is secured, the DPD is submitted to the relevant awarding body.²

5.1.2 Where the awarding body seeks further development of the DPD, the revised documentation is submitted for approval by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee or Academic Board, in line with 5.1.1.

¹ Access to ASQO SharePoint is restricted to ASQO staff only.

² For further information on modifications, please see the Academic Standards and Quality Manual.

5.1.3 Once the Definitive Programme Documentation receives final approval, the Director of Academic Standards and Quality authorises issuing of the DPD to the following senior staff who are responsible for updating systems/information sources as listed:

- Academic Registrar (Thesis and for admissions purposes)
- Head of Marketing (GBS website)
- Head of Timetabling (Zoho)
- Head of Learning Resources and Technology (Moodle)
- Faculty Dean (Programme and module handbooks)
- Director of HR (Life)

The DPD is also issued for information to:

- Head of Data and Information
- Head Librarian

5.2 Programme Suspension

5.2.1 Where Academic Board confirms the suspension of a programme, ASQO contacts the senior staff listed in paragraph 4.3 so that systems and information are updated regarding the status of the programme, as appropriate to continuing students and applicants.

5.3 Programme closure

5.3.1 Where Academic Board confirms closure of a programme, a teach out plan is drawn up by the Faculty in liaison with relevant professional services and approved by Academic Board. Teach out plans are monitored by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee until the final cohort has graduated. Once the final cohort has graduated, ASQO requests Academic Board approval to withdraw and archive the DPD.

6. Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body documentation

6.1 All documentation related to the application and approval of accreditation provided by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB), together with all accompanying details of the arrangements for accreditation, are maintained by the Academic Standards and Quality Office. The details of accreditation which apply to the programme, or module/unit are held in the DPD Directory held by the Academic Standards and Quality Office. This includes the PSRB name, date and details of the accreditation and scope of any conditions which may apply at programme, module/unit

or other levels of application. These PSRB details are maintained with the DPD and updated annually to ensure application to students is regularly checked and oversight of publication of information maintained. ASQO is responsible for providing Registry with details of PSRB accreditations in line with reporting requirements for Discover Uni.

6.2 Where a programme has attracted support from industrial or other bodies, providing access to materials, or experiences which contribute to material provision, the details of the relationship between GBS and the supporting body are included in the DPD. Details of such support are maintained and reviewed at least annually by the Academic Standards and Quality Office to ensure application to students is regularly checked and oversight of publication of information maintained. ASQO is responsible for providing and confirming materials for the preparation of formal reporting requirements for Discover Uni or similar.

7. Responsibilities: Communicating and Publishing Definitive Programme Documentation

7.1 The Academic Standards and Quality Office is responsible for providing the Definitive Programme Documentation as follows:

- Academic Registrar (Thesis and for admissions purposes)
- Head of Marketing (GBS website)
- Head of Timetabling (Zoho)
- Head of Learning Resources and Technology (Moodle)
- Faculty Dean (Programme and module handbooks)
- Director of HR (Life)

The DPD is also issued for information to:

- Head of Data and Information
- Head Librarian

7.2 Definitive Programme Documentation is confirmed annually by the Academic Standards and Quality Office in September. At that point ASQO communicates any changes to senior staff listed in 7.1 above.

7.3 ASQO checks the accuracy of DPD information published on the GBS website, Life, Moodle and in programme and module handbooks annually in September and additionally following the implementation of programme modifications. ASQO liaises with the senior staff listed in 7.1 should action be needed following the accuracy check.

7.4 Changes to the DPD outside the processes set out in this policy are not permitted.