Approval of Learning Course Policy and Procedure

Author: Jenny Stalker

Date: March 2018

Review Date: March 2021

Equality Impact Assessment Date: March 2018

Contents

History of Changes

Version	Description of Change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Addition of responsibilities relating to gaining approved centre status. Addition of section closing the loop on completion of approval conditions prior to course inclusion in curriculum plan and application for awarding body approval.	J Stalker	29-3-18

1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a process for the approval of all learning courses. This policy:

- Describes the responsibilities of college staff in the approval of learning courses

- Sets out the procedure for internal approval of all learning courses

- Sets out the procedure for the external approval of all learning courses

2 Policy Statement

West Lothian College will offer learning courses which meet the needs of our learners and employers and which satisfy the quality assurance criteria of the relevant awarding body.

3 Scope

This policy covers the approval of full time courses, part time courses, modified courses and individual units.

The policy covers internal approval, external approval and devolved approval of all learning courses and learning units.

4 Responsibilities

The Vice Principal Curriculum and Planning is responsible for curriculum planning and approval of all new courses

Centre Managers are responsible for ensuring that all courses offered within their Centres have been considered through the curriculum planning process and are included in the Centre Operating Plan.

Centre Managers are responsible for ensuring that all courses offered within their Centres meet the quality assurance criteria of the awarding body and are fully resourced and approved before delivery.

Centre Managers are responsible for providing required information and hosting site visits to enable the College to attain approved centre status where this does not currently exist.

Centre Managers are responsible for completing and submitting internal and external approval documentation for learning courses to the Head of Quality and Learner Services and for completing actions identified at the approval meeting.

Centre Managers are responsible for completing and submitting approval documentation for approval of modified courses or individual learning units that have devolved awarding body status.

The Head of Quality and Learner Services is responsible for the management and implementation of the College internal approval process for new or modified courses and for courses and units that have devolved awarding body status.

The Head of Quality and Learner Services is responsible for authorising and submitting approval documentation required by the relevant awarding body to obtain external approval of learning courses.

5   Procedure for the Approval of Learning Courses

New and modified learning courses will be discussed and approved for delivery by the Vice Principal Curriculum and Planning through the Curriculum Planning process.   Approved courses will be presented for approval to an Approval Panel Meeting for subsequent inclusion in the Centre Operating Plan.

Prior to seeking approval, the Centre Managers and Course Team will ensure that the course can be properly developed, resourced and there are suitably qualified staff to deliver and internally verify the course.

The Centre Managers and Course Team will complete an Application for Course Approval document (CA001) outlining how the course meets the Regional Outcome Agreement and College Targets and demonstrating evidence of market demand, employer and HEI engagement, and detailed plans for the delivery, assessment and evaluation of the course.

The Centre Manager will liaise with the Vice Principal Curriculum Support and Finance and the Finance Manager to produce a detailed financial statement that includes start-up and delivery costs and evidences the financial viability of the course over the first three years of delivery.

The Centre Manager will liaise with the Head of Quality and Learner Services to arrange for the course application for approval to be considered at the Approval Panel Meeting.

The date for the Approval Panel Meeting will be identified in the College Operating Calendar and will meet the timescales of the cycle of Curriculum Planning and meetings of the Learning and Teaching Committee of the Board of Governors.

Membership of the Approval Panel Meeting will comprise the Vice Principal Curriculum and Planning, the Head of Quality and Learner Services, the Quality Officer and relevant external representation from the business community. Other representation may be invited from relevant Centre and/or Service Managers and the Student Association.

The Course Approval Panel will consider course approval applications and will make recommendations to the Learning and Teaching Committee of the Board of Governors.

Where required, Centre Managers and Course Team members may be invited to join the Learning and Teaching Committee to contribute to discussions on individual proposals.

The Learning and Teaching Committee will consider recommendations from the Approval Panel Meeting and will make final decisions on course approvals.   Any conditions of approval will be communicated to the Vice Principal Curriculum and Planning and the Head of Quality and Learner Services who will confirm this in writing to Centre Managers.

All conditions of approval must be completed and signed off prior to inclusion in the curriculum plan.   The Quality Team must be informed to enable appropriate approvals to be obtained prior to delivery.

Resource implications of all courses approved by the Learning and Teaching Committee will be considered by the Finance and General Purposes Sub Committee.

The Head of Quality and Learner Services will confirm resource requirements for approved learning courses in writing to appropriate service areas.

If a course requires external approval from the awarding or professional body, the Head of Quality and Learner Services will submit relevant documentation and make arrangements for an external approval meeting or event.

6   Subsequent Amendments to Approved Learning Courses

Where the Centre requires to make a change to the staffing or resourcing costs already approved, the Centre Manager must complete a CA006 Amendment to Approval of Learning Course form and submit this to the Vice Principal Curriculum and Planning for authorisation.   The authorised form will be processed and held by the Quality Officer.

7   Procedure for approval of modified courses, individual units and courses and units with devolved awarding body status

Modified courses and new or replacement units must be delivered within the agreed resources of the Centre Operating Plan.

The Centre Head will complete a CA003 or CA004 form to provide the rationale for the change to the curriculum portfolio and confirming that the necessary resources are in place for delivery.

The Head of Quality and Learner Services will oversee completion of the relevant documentation to obtain external approval from the awarding or professional body.

Where the course or unit holds devolved awarding body status, the Head of Quality and Learner Services will complete the relevant documentation to register the course for delivery with the awarding or professional body.

8 Exceptions

To enable the curriculum to respond to the demands of stakeholders, it may be necessary to fast track the internal approval procedure. In such instances, the Head of Quality and Learner Services will, in consultation with the Vice Principal Curriculum and Planning, process internal approval applications through a Desk Based procedure.

9 Documentation

CA001	Course Approval Application
CA002	Leadership Team and Quality and Learner Services Approval feedback
CA003	Approval of Modified Courses
CA004	Approval of Individual Units
CA005.1	Curriculum Course DESK Approval of Learning Course and Feedback
CA005.2	Commercial Course DESK Approval of Learning Course and Feedback
CA006	Amendment to CA001 Course Approval Application

10 Evaluation and Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed in March 2021

Equality Impact Assessment

Before carrying out an EIA, you should familiarise yourself with the College's EIA Policy Statement and Guidance, along with further information and resources which are available on Serengeti

EIA covers **strategies**, **policies, procedures, plans, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services**, but will be referred to hereinafter as 'policy/practice'.

Policy/Practice (name or brief description):	Approval of Learning Course Policy and Procedure
Reason for Equality Impact Asessment (choose from the following options):	
• Proposed new policy/practice • Proposed change to an existing policy/practice • Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice • Other (please give detail):	• Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice
Person responsible for the policy area or practice:	
Name: Job title:	Jenny Stalker Head of Service: Quality and Learner Services
An Equality Impact Assessment must be carried out if the policy/practice: • affects **operational** or **strategic functions** of the College • is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance)	
Why the EIA is being carried out	• affects operational or strategic functions of the College

Equality Groups

Relevant to the Policy/Practice, identify which of the undernoted equality groups are impacted upon:

- Age - Disability - race (including ethnicity and nationality) - religion or belief - sex - sexual orientation - gender reassignment - pregnancy and maternity - marriage or civil partnership	None

Record your assessment against the following statements:

Statement	Equality assessment
Detail the evidence of the needs of the identified equality groups and any gaps in information	The policy is designed to facilitate good curriculum planning and to promote opportunities for all our learners by keeping our portfolio offering up to date and relevant to employment.
Will application of this policy/practice lead to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups?	This policy has no impact on the above groups and applies equally to all users.
If yes, how will the policy/practice be changed to contribute to advancing equality of opportunity	
State how this policy/practice will foster good relations:	
Will the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups?	
If yes, how will the policy/practice be changed to contribute to advancing equality of opportunity	
Which equality groups or communities have been consulted in the development and review of this policy/practice?	None

Equality Impact Assessment Outcome Select one of the four options below to indicate how the development/review of the policy/practice will be progressed and state the rationale for the decision. (Delete the options that do not apply):	
Option 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.	
Monitoring	
When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?	**March 2021**
Publication of EIA	
Can this EIA be published in full, now? Please state Yes or No If No – please specify when it may be published or indicate restrictions that apply:	**Yes**
Sign-off	
EIA undertaken by Name: Date: Accepted by person responsible for the policy/practice named above: Name: Date:	**Shelagh Fraser 29-3-18** **J Stalker 29 March 2018**

Retain a copy of this form for your own records and send a copy to ebrown@west-lothian.ac.uk