



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
informatics

Teaching Festival

May 2022

Welcome



Themes

- Course Design and Improvement
- Skills Development for Students
- Assessment

Schedule

- 3 days - AM and PM sessions
- Mix of guidance, experience talks and discussions
- Internal and external speakers
- Coffee breaks - discussions

Course Proposal/Improvement Involving BoS Approval

Björn Franke

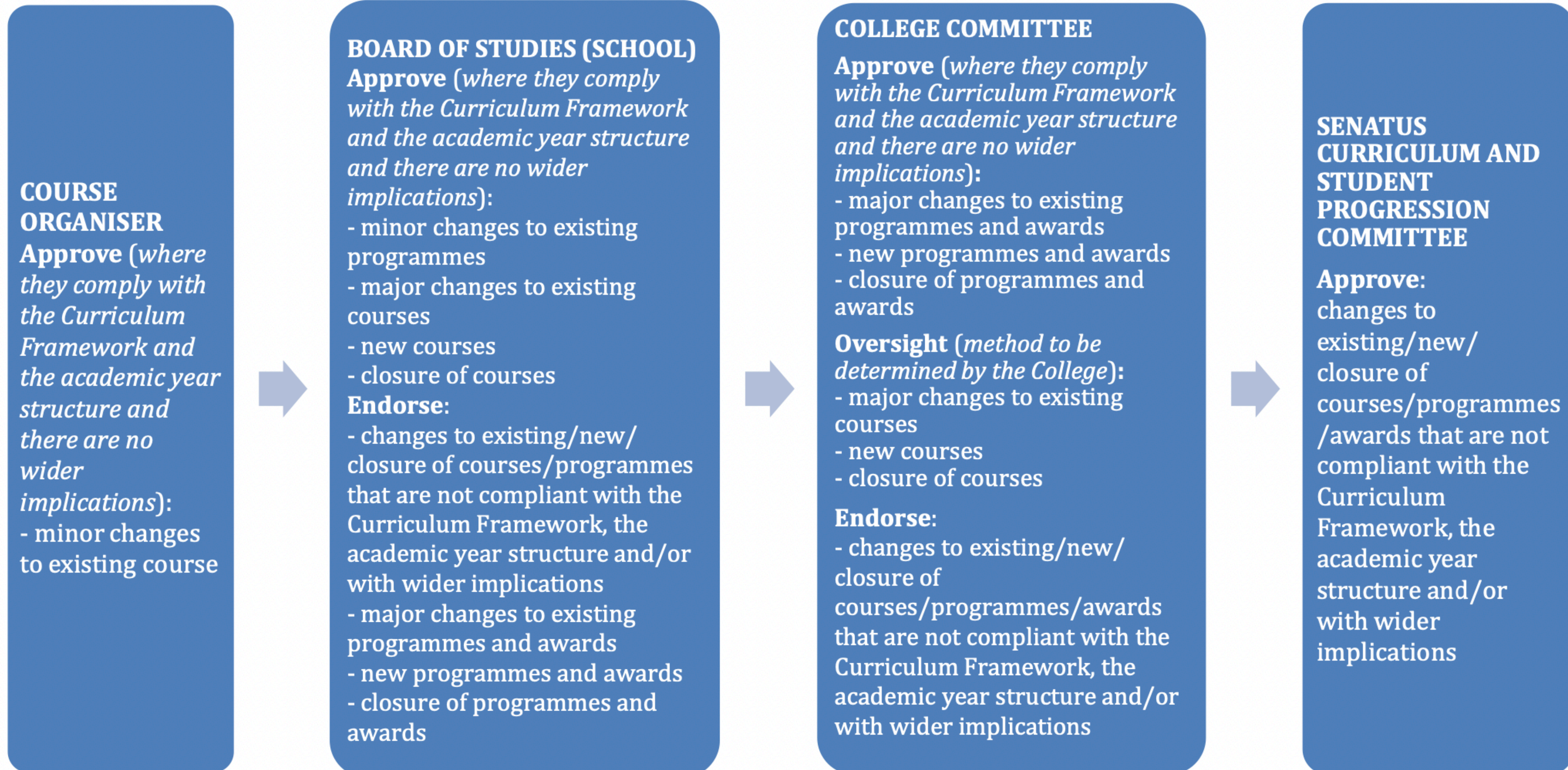
Why Change A Course?

- Year-to-year update of content and material
- To improve students' learning, e.g. explain a difficult concept differently
- To address issues raised in Course Evaluation Questionnaires, in Staff-Student Liaison Meetings or Staff-Student Rep Meetings
- To apply a different pedagogical concept



Programme and Course Approval and Management

Minimum Levels of Approval (all stages prior to where a decision is approved should be completed)



When is BoS Approval Required?

Minor and Major Changes to Existing Courses

The categories outlined below are regarded as **major** changes:

- Name of the course*
- Level of the course*
- Credit value*
- Learning outcomes
- Balance of assessment types and their weightings (components of assessment)
- Home subject area*

* Will result in a new course being created

Reality

Major course change is often actually a good opportunity for a complete course redesign → New Course Proposal

Most of times major course changes relate to “balance of assessment types and weightings”

Changes to the Number of Credit Points

Changes to the number of credit points

This change has implications for the allocation of teaching duties and other resourcing, and also requires the creation of a new course in DRPS. You will need to follow the procedures and deadlines for proposing a new course.

[New Course Proposal Guidelines](#)

Course title, level, normal year taken

Changes to the course title, level, and/or normal year taken

These changes require the creation of a new course in DRPS and consequent updates to DPTs, but do not affect allocation of teaching duties. Therefore, they can be done up until the rollover of the DRPS in April (but will normally need to be approved no later than March to allow time to make the updates).

If you are considering these changes, please get in touch with the DDoLT (Curriculum) in the first instance with a brief statement and justification of the proposed change(s). Please mention whether any other changes are needed (which will often be the case for changes of level and/or normal year). You will then be advised what type of proposal to submit to Board of Studies for approval:

- If the changes (other than those listed above) are fairly minor, you won't need to fill in a New Course Proposal Form, and can instead describe the changes relative to the existing course. ISS will create the new course by copying the remainder of the information from the existing one.
- However, depending on the nature and extent of your changes, you may be asked to fill in the form for New Course Proposals.

The change must be approved by BoS no later than March to allow time to make the updates prior to DRPS rollover.

Assessment Balance/Learning Outcomes

Changes to assessment balance or learning outcomes

According to University policy, these are considered “major changes” to a course and normally require approval by the Board of Studies. Since there is no guarantee of a BoS meeting after March of each academic year, it is strongly recommended to submit any such proposals before then.

Since changes to assessment balance may require other changes to course design and/or resourcing, please contact the DDoLT (Curriculum) in the first instance with a brief description of your proposed change and its ramifications to the design and resourcing of the course. If the change looks reasonable, you will be invited to submit a BoS proposal.

If your change is very minor (e.g., correcting a typo or making a small change to a Learning Outcome), it may be approved by convenor action.

Learning Outcomes

- Intended Learning Outcomes are the start of all course changes

At Edinburgh, there is specific guidance on writing ILOs for credit-bearing courses:

- The stem is: '*On completion of this course the student will be able to...*'
- The recommended number of ILOs is 5.
- The ILOs should relate to each of these themes:
 - Knowledge and understanding (mainly subject based).
 - Practice (applied knowledge and understanding).
 - Generic cognitive skills (e.g., evaluation, critical analysis).
 - Communication, numeracy and IT skills.
 - Autonomy, accountability and working with others.

- <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/learning-technology/learning-design/learning-design-resources/intended-learning-outcomes>

All Other Changes

All other changes

For changes to the course summary, description, delivery details, prerequisites, or other aspects not mentioned above, please contact the DDoLT (Curriculum) in the first instance with a brief description and justification of your proposed change, and whether it has any resourcing implications. The DDoLT (Curriculum) will decide whether your changes can be approved by convenor action or need to be submitted to the Board.

- Typically, changes to the summary and description can be approved by convenor action unless your course is an important prerequisite for others.
- Changes to pre- and co-requisites, “prohibited combinations” and “other requirements” can also typically be approved by convenor action, but you may be asked to check with relevant colleagues first (e.g. Programme Directors).
- Proposed changes to aspects of delivery (such as the number or type of contact hours) often have implications for resourcing and/or the time required from students, so you should address these in your initial request (and your BoS proposal, if you are asked to submit to the Board).

Time Scales

Undergraduate

Postgraduate

	Undergraduate	Postgraduate
Changes to or closure of existing courses	<p>Where this would constitute a major change to published information about the future structure and content of a programme, the same timescales apply as for major changes to existing programmes</p> <p>Otherwise, Schools should aim to make changes by the end of March, for the following session (although minor amendments to the published course descriptors could be made subsequently between April and August, for example to take account of issues raised during the course review and monitoring)</p>	<p>Where this would constitute a major change to published information about the future structure and content of a programme, the same timescales apply as for major changes to existing programmes</p> <p>Otherwise, Schools should aim to make changes by the end of March, for the following session (although minor amendments to the published course descriptors could be made subsequently between April and August, for example to take account of issues raised during the course review and monitoring)</p>

Additional Information

- <https://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/admin/committees/bos/existing-course-and-programme-updates-guidelines>
- Programme and Course Approval Management
https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/prog_course_approval.pdf

Case Studies/Discussion

Course Improvement Not Involving BoS Approval

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When is BoS Approval Not Required?

Changes to all other categories, which generally cover course content and administrative aspects, (e.g. course descriptions, transferable skills, reading lists/learning resources, Course Organiser and Secretary, and delivery information) are regarded as **minor**. As a minimum, Course Organisers can approve these changes (with the exception of changes to the Course Organiser and Course Secretary) although Schools may choose to add an additional level of approval for these changes, for example, to ensure programme coherence. Decisions regarding changes of Course Organiser and Course Secretary are management decisions made by the School in line with normal practices.

Examples of Minor Changes

- Update/Renewal of one or more lectures without change of lecture topics
- Content of “research outlook” lectures
- Coursework content without changing the nature of the coursework
 - For example, substantial change of a coding exercise (subject to similar level of complexity and estimated number of hours)
- **Not a minor change:** e.g. replacement of a coding task with essay

Assessment Changes

- This can be tricky!
- Over time course organisers sometimes increase the **volume of coursework**
 - Same number of pieces of coursework, but individual coursework becomes larger
 - Eventually workload outgrows original specification
- **Think about Learning Outcomes - all assessment is against LOs!**
- Keep a close eye on the number of hours a **typical student** would take
 - Students take surprisingly long to learn to apply new concepts
 - Easy to underestimate

Case Studies/Discussion

Assessment in Informatics

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- “Assessment in informatics”, which might include points about:
- Common Extended Marking Scheme
- Assessing learning outcomes efficiently
- Quantity of assessment
- Quality of feedback
- Communication with your students (and other course markers?)
- Adapting assessment to both CEMS and SCQF levels