

**Section 5: Programme design and
development**

Guidance on removing optional modules after module selection has taken place

Optional modules should not normally be withdrawn after module selection has taken place. The late withdrawal of modules will impact on students who have selected the module (possibly because it relates specifically to their interests or career/further study plans), as well as colleagues in Timetabling, Exams and Support Centres, who have to amend diets and timetables, and support students in making alternative module selections. This may lead to an impact on student satisfaction measures, such as those reflected in the NSS and PTES.

However, it is recognised that there may be times when withdrawing an optional module after module selection is appropriate, for example, where:

- no students have selected it
- few students have selected it and there are risks to the quality of the student experience in still running it for a small cohort
- there is (unexpectedly) no-one available to teach it
- external factors impact on the delivery of the module (for example, a field trip site becomes unavailable).

Before requesting to withdraw a module, a School should do the following:

- check that the module is not compulsory for any programme (if the module is listed as compulsory for a programme, the request for withdrawal must be considered by UPB and will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. The RISIS report “All diets a module appears in” may be helpful in checking this);
- identify other schools using the module as an option, and liaise with the relevant SCTL about the withdrawal;
- identify if there are any co-requisite modules that would also need to be considered for withdrawal alongside it (or identify whether the need to have this module as a co-requisite can be removed);
- identify the impact that removing the module would have on eligibility to select modules in later years, i.e. which modules have this one as a pre-requisite;
- identify the impact that removing the module would have on the basket(s) which it is in, e.g. inadvertently making a companion module now compulsory on a programme when it was not stated in the programme description as being so;
- identify which module(s) are left available for each impacted student to select in place of the proposed withdrawn module – this might require a detailed look at

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pre-requisites to ensure that all such students are eligible to select at least one of the remaining modules;

- identify the likely impact on remaining modules that students will need to select from, including workload impact on colleagues and whether additional teaching sessions will need to be submitted to the timetabling team;
- if possible, impacted students should be consulted, particularly if the reason for withdrawing a module is solely a concern about the student experience in a small module cohort – students may prefer to continue in a small cohort rather than be forced to choose a less desirable module.

The School Director of Teaching and Learning (SDTL) is responsible for requesting the withdrawal of a module after module selection has taken place, and the relevant Teaching and Learning Dean will make the decision about whether or not the module can be withdrawn. If permission is granted to withdraw a module after module selection, the SDTL will be responsible for notifying the Support Centre, Timetabling Team, Exams, Module Convenor and Programme Director(s). The Programme Director(s) will be responsible for contacting impacted students, notifying them of the modules they can choose in place of the withdrawn one.

If a module is withdrawn after module selection has taken place, the SDTL should initiate discussion at the next meeting of the relevant Board of Studies and Student Experience (BoSSE) about plans for avoiding the situation the following year, including considering not offering the module again.

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