

Short Course Policy

Policy Category: Academic/ Governance

Subject: Approval and review of short courses

Approving Authority: College Council

Responsible Officer: Vice President (Education & Student Success)

Responsible Office: Academic Regulations, Quality & Standards

Related Procedures: Academic Regulations

Related College Policies: n/a

Effective Date: July 2023

Supersedes: July 2020

Next Review: July 2026

I. Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this policy is to support the development of short course activities, by providing clear guidelines and a transparent regulatory framework that governs academic, quality assurance, financial and legal aspects on behalf of the institution.

It is expected that all credit bearing short courses will follow the College's Academic Regulations. For non-credit bearing short courses, there is an expectation that summative assessment will not take place and therefore Academic Regulations do not apply. However, if a student has a complaint about a non-credit bearing short course, they may follow the College's Complaints Policy.

King's Professional & Executive Development (KPED) is the business unit that specialises in enabling and enhancing the College's short course activity.

II. Definitions

All short courses are characterised as:

Short course	A combination of lectures, seminars, workshops and/ or online content, with articulated learning outcomes, completion of which leads to a certificate of attendance. A short course may comprise a maximum of 300 learning hours, which includes contact hours, assessment (if applicable) and self-directed learning.
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Short courses fall into two categories:

Credit bearing short course	A certification of research-led, assessed learning (5-30 credits). Students will receive a transcript detailing the credit awarded alongside a certificate of attendance. Credit bearing short courses are also known as freestanding modules or microcredentials.
Non-credit bearing short course	A combination of lectures, seminars, workshops and/ or online content (including MOOCs), with articulated learning outcomes, completion of which lead to a certificate of attendance.

Types of short course (referenced in this policy) include:

Continuing professional development	Short courses designed for the maintenance and development of knowledge and skills needed to perform in a professional context.
Executive education	Short courses designed for management development so that participants (mid-level management and C-suite executives) become more effective at meeting organisation goals.
Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)	A fully online, self-paced, non-credit bearing short course, usually with no fee, characterised by unlimited participation and open access, with no entry requirements.

III. Policy

1. General - applicable to all short courses

- 1.1 All students participating in non-credit bearing short courses will receive a certificate of attendance signalling satisfactory participation in the course. These certificates do not necessarily indicate successful completion. It is for faculties to determine when a satisfactory level of attendance or participation is achieved. Students participating in credit bearing short courses who successfully complete will receive a transcript detailing the credit awarded alongside a certificate of attendance.
- 1.2 For both credit bearing and non-credit bearing short courses, that are delivered and assessed within faculties, the approval mechanism resides with that faculty. Further details on how to propose your short course and seek approval are available via the [King's Professional & Executive Development \(KPED\) intranet pages](#). The [Programme Development & Approval Sub-Committee](#) (PDASC) shall receive a listing of all approved short courses. Where a short course is jointly delivered all faculties involved must approve the short course. Approval of the business case shall reside within the home faculty.
- 1.3 For short courses delivered by units outside of the faculty structure, academic approval for the delivery of the short course will be the responsibility of PDASC, while approval for any business case will be the responsibility of [KPED](#).
- 1.4 For credit bearing short courses delivered by [King's Health Partners \(KHP\)](#), KHP shall seek sponsorship from a named faculty. Approval of the short course will reside with the sponsoring faculty. PDASC shall receive a listing of approved credit bearing short courses delivered by KHP. For non-credit bearing short courses delivered by KHP, these are approved by KHP with no formal reporting mechanism required to PDASC.
- 1.5 Proposals for the delivery of short courses for external clients shall require KPED approval. Proposals for short courses produced for external clients must have a legal contractual basis and contracts must be negotiated and signed by the appropriate authorised King's personnel. KPED will lead on client and contractual negotiations and ensure financial and legal compliance on behalf of the institution.
- 1.6 Short courses delivered under the aegis of a body other than King's College London, such as NHS Hospital Trusts, will only be subject to this policy if they require credit awarded by the College. Where approval for these short courses has been given, they shall be reported to PDASC.

- 1.7 Approval for a short course may be denied for a range of reasons, including a lack of financial viability, staff workload, failure to meeting appropriate academic standards and/ or failure to comply with the King's regulatory and quality assurance framework.
- 1.8 The short course catalogue is managed by KPED. Information on how to add a short course to the catalogue can be found at [marketing your short course](#). Compulsory fields include start and end dates, tuition fee, apply link, course overview, aims and objectives, and entry requirements.
- 1.9 Each short course should submit an evaluation report annually to the [College Education Committee](#) or confirm that annual monitoring of the short courses fell under the remit of Continuous Enhancement Review or Periodic Programme Review.
- 1.10 Short courses will be required to provide data as requested for reporting purposes to KPED.

2. Credit bearing short courses

- 2.1 Credit bearing short courses offered by King's will consist of 5, 10, 15 or 30 academic credits. Credit values of 5 or 10 are applicable only at postgraduate level for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) or Executive Education purposes. Five and 10 credit modules at undergraduate level are only applicable to KHP. Exceptionally, College Education Committee may approve modules of a non-standard credit value.
- 2.2 In addition to the process detailed in section 1, approval of credit bearing short courses shall apply the process set out in the section on the design and approval of individual modules as part of, or outside, the programme approval process contained within the 'procedures for programme and module approval and modification' in the [Quality Assurance Handbook](#).
- 2.3 The faculty or PDASC (in accordance with 1.2) shall consider whether the learning outcomes, assessment methodology and credit value proposed are appropriate according to the College credit framework. Each credit bearing short course shall adhere to the College's Academic Regulations, including enrolment requirements, mitigating circumstances and deferrals, academic appeals and complaints. The role of PDASC is to approve the short course based on academic merit alone. Consequently, any staffing requests alongside the short course proposal is not in PDASC's remit to approve.
- 2.4 Each credit bearing short course must be assigned to an appropriate Assessment Sub-Board. Existing external examiners must be notified of any addition to their duties in such circumstances, otherwise the normal process for appointing external examiners should be undertaken.
- 2.5 Credit bearing short courses at level 7 may be considered for inclusion in the College's stackable framework for CPD. The multidisciplinary postgraduate awards in Professional Development are managed by KPED, as part of the School of Professional & Continuing Education, and are governed by the Professional Education Portfolio Sub-Committee. Credit bearing short courses must be approved in accordance with section 12 of the Quality Assurance Handbook prior to being considered for inclusion in the stackable framework.

3. Finance

- 3.1 Short courses should provide a positive financial return for King's, with a target gross margin (income less direct costs) of 50%. Exceptions to this will require the approval of the faculty's Director of Operations.
- 3.2 The business case must include the cost of delivery including academic time, professional services staff and other non-staff costs. Marketing costs should also be included with a minimum budget set at 10% of projected income. Short course expenditure may be run through departmental reserves or recorded directly in faculty accounts that are reported to Executive Deans and KPED by Management Accountants.
- 3.3 Faculties, divisions and departments shall bear any losses resulting from short course activity previously authorised by their Director of Operations.
- 3.4 Short courses delivered online may be subject to goods and services tax. Please refer to the [King's website](#) or the Finance & Planning Directorate for further details.
- 3.5 Staff may receive personal benefit from undertaking teaching on short courses as additional salary, subject to approval by the Director of Operations.
- 3.6 Executive Deans will be required to incorporate an annual account of income generated from short courses into their strategic and financial planning, including the amount and percentage of faculty/ division overhead on that income, and the amount and percentage of income disbursed to named individuals, research groups and/ or departments.
- 3.7 Fees for credit bearing short courses shall be raised in SITS and the applications will be processed through Admissions via King's Apply. Full payment should be secured prior to the start date of the course.
- 3.8 Fee income for non-credit bearing short courses must be charged through finance-approved College pathways and coded to account 1179 (non-credit bearing short course fee income). Where the fees are raised to the customer on a sales invoice in the College's finance system (Business World), the income should be coded to the relevant sales product code. If the faculty does not have a product code for the course, they should [request a new trade sales product](#).