

<b>Document Title/Reference</b>	<b>Procedures for Creating and Revising Course Manuals</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>To provide clear policy and procedures for creating and reviewing written course manuals that accompany modules.</p> <p>To facilitate the continuous improvement in the course material provided to students.</p> <p>To ensure that review activities take place in a regular and systematic manner.</p>
<b>Scope</b>	The creation, review and revision of course manuals.
<b>Contents</b>	<p>1.1 Introduction</p> <p>1.2 General Principles</p> <p>1.3 Process of Creating a Course Manual</p> <p>1.4 Process of Revising a Course Manual</p> <p>Appendix: Manual Review Form</p>
<b>Audience &amp; Communication</b>	Applicable to all Whitaker Staff
<b>Contextual Guidelines</b>	<p>ESG 1.9 'On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes'.</p> <p>QQI Core Guidelines Nos. 7.1 (c) and 3.3.</p>
<b>Related Policy</b>	<p><i>Module/Programme Design and Approval Policy</i></p> <p><i>Module/Programme Review Policy &amp; Procedures</i></p> <p><i>Student Feedback &amp; Participation Policy &amp; Procedures</i></p> <p><i>Teaching, Learning &amp; Assessment Policy</i></p>
<b>Policy Owner &amp; Implementation</b>	<p>The Head of the Whitaker School has overall responsibility for the policy. The policy is approved by IPA Faculty.</p> <p>The policy is implemented by module/programme coordinators in conjunction with the editor/distance education specialist.</p>
<b>Key Implementation Mechanisms</b>	<p>As part of their annual module review, examiners evaluate the general teaching effectiveness of their course manual.</p> <p>Students complete annual programme evaluation forms and periodic surveys that elicit feedback on course manuals.</p> <p>Module and programme reviews incorporate examiner/lecturer evaluation, subject/co-ordinator evaluation, student evaluation,</p>

	<p>staff/student management committee proceedings.</p> <p>Improvement measures are implemented in consultation with examiners in respect of each module.</p>
<p><b>Key Monitoring Mechanisms</b></p>	<p>Module/programme co-ordinators review and sign-off on annual evaluations from module examiners, extern examiners and students.</p> <p>Module/programme co-ordinators maintain records of revisions made to manuals resulting from annual reviews.</p> <p>Head of the Whitaker School signs off on annual module reviews completed by module/programme co-ordinators.</p> <p>Head of the Whitaker School signs off on periodic programme reviews completed by module/programme co-ordinators and peer reviewers.</p>
<p><b>Key Definitions</b></p>	<p>Programme = set of lessons or prescribed group of individual modules leading to a qualification on the national framework of qualifications.</p> <p>Module = module or sub-component of a programme with defined title, learning outcomes, syllabus and credits.</p> <p>Programme co-ordinator = person responsible for the management of a programme.</p> <p>Module co-ordinator = person responsible for the management of a module.</p> <p>Examiner = person responsible for the teaching &amp; assessment of a module.</p>
<p><b>Revision History, Commencement Date &amp; Date of Next Review</b></p>	<p>2006: Version 1 2010: Version 2 2017: Version 3</p> <p>Commencement Date: September 2017</p> <p>Date of Next Review: 2020</p>

## Course Manual QA Policy

### 1 Creating and Revising Course Manuals

#### 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The majority of IPA programmes can be taken through blended learning. Combining classroom teaching and self-directed study, blended learning is an established method of programme delivery in higher education. An important component in IPA blended learning programmes is the module/course manual. Students receive – in addition to a textbook from a commercial publisher – a specially commissioned course manual for each module they take. This manual is printed at the IPA.
- 1.1.2 The provision of course manuals impose important disciplines on academic staff. It ensures that all courses are committed to paper in advance of the commencement of the programmes. It means that academic staff must be clear about the objectives they set for both courses and how they expect students to use recommended textbooks.
- 1.1.3 The provision of manuals acts as an important quality-control mechanism, not just for the process of blended learning but also for the delivery of seminars and tutorials and the setting of assignments and examinations. It is most useful that, in advance of the academic year, academic staff have worked through the course material to arrive at well-informed judgements about pacing, choice of assessments and the general effectiveness of communication with students.
- 1.1.4 As part of their annual module reviews, module coordinators must assess, in conjunction with the examiners' comments, the course manuals for the modules that they teach and manage.
- 1.1.5 The design and development of course manuals cannot always be strictly linear. Revisions, whether substantial or modest, are iterative, building on other relevant matters, including course outcomes, curriculum changes, and student and lecturer feedback. Notwithstanding this fact, from a QA perspective, the process for monitoring the quality of course manuals is of necessity largely divided into specific steps and phases. These steps and phases are clearly linked to other formal procedures.
- 1.1.7 The creation and/or review of a manual should be led by the module co-ordinator. He/she should work in conjunction with the programme coordinator, the lecturer delivering and assessing the module, and the editor (who will take the manual through to print).

## **1.2 General Principles**

- 1.2.1 Course manuals are an important component of the materials provided to distance education students. They are designed to enable a student to obtain a solid understanding of the module curriculum. This understanding is supplemented via attendance at seminars and tutorials, an essential textbook, supplementary reading, and a range of online supports.
- 1.2.2 The responsibility for a course manual lies with the relevant module coordinator.
- 1.2.2 Course manuals must be written and edited in accordance with the established principles that determine successful distance education material. An editor should advise and assist throughout the process.
- 1.2.2 Course manuals should be given to students at the start of the academic year or semester.
- 1.2.3 The manuals should be written by subject experts/practitioners. The lecturer/examiner is the first choice to write the manuals. If a different author is used, he/she will be given extensive briefing by the lecturer/examiner and the module coordinator.
- 1.2.4 Course manuals should be written to a high standard. Clarity of expression, logical sequencing of topics, self-assessment activities, and directions to further study are integral elements.
- 1.2.5 Course manuals should generally be consistent in format and presentation and printed to a high-quality standard.

## **1.3 Process of Creating a Manual**

- 1.3.1 The creation of a course manual must be done in accordance with the Module Programme submission approved by the Awarding Authority.
- 1.3.2 To ensure that the course manual reaches a high standard, a team-based approach should be taken that seeks to bring together expert subject knowledge, clear written expression, and essential distance learning elements. The team will consist of: the module coordinator (he/she is the overall project manager and primary point of contact for the author), the author (he/she is a subject expert who has been given extensive guidance on how best to write course manuals) and an editor (he/she advises on editorial matters, edits and proofreads all the material submitted and manages the production process).
- 1.3.3 In planning a course manual, the module coordinator will create a Manual Outline. To create this, the coordinator will require:
  - (i) the approved curriculum
  - (ii) the learning objectives for the module

- (iii) the teaching, learning and assessment methods
- (iv) sample assignment titles and sample exam papers
- (v) the essential textbook supplied in conjunction with the manual
- (vi) a list of essential and recommended reading
- (vii) other feedback from students, staff, employers and/or consultants on particular issues to be addressed.

1.3.4 The Manual Outline will include:

- i. the module objectives and learning outcomes
- ii. a summary table of contents
- iii. the timelines for the project

1.3.5 The module coordinator should then commission an author. The lecturer/examiner will usually be the first person considered. An author should be commissioned on the basis of the following:

- i. Subject knowledge
- ii. Writing skills
- iii. Understanding of the particular requirements that distance students have.

1.3.6 The chosen author will be sent the Course Manual Outline. He/she will then attend a Manual Consultation with the module coordinator, the editor, and the lecturer (in situations where the lecturer is not the author). He/she will be briefed on all aspects of the project and will receive two documents: IPA Guidance for Writing Course Manuals and IPA House Style.

1.3.7 The author will submit, to the module coordinator, a detailed table of contents and a sample chapter. The table of contents will provide, inter alia, indicative subheadings in the order in which they will appear and summary notes on those subheadings. The sample chapter should be indicative of the writing style, of the intellectual 'pitch' and of the level of detail. Both should be submitted within two weeks of the Manual Consultation.

1.3.8 The module coordinator will then either approve the start of the formal writing process or request a further meeting. If approved, the author submits chapters according to an agreed schedule.

1.3.9 The module coordinator reviews the chapters as they are submitted. He/she engages in correspondence with the author to advise on the work submitted and on issues arising. When chapters are to standard, they are passed to the editor for copyediting.

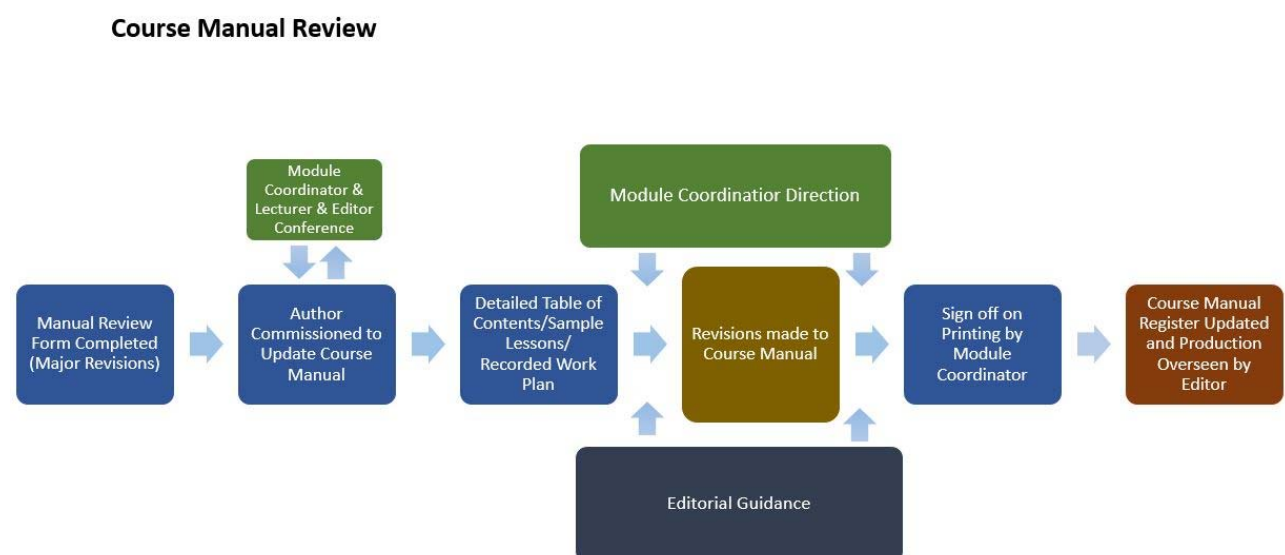
1.3.10 When the course manual is printed, the editorial specialist updates the Manual Status Form in preparation for the next review.

## 1.4 Process of Revising a Course Manual

- 1.4.1 The Annual Module Review completed by module coordinators determines whether a manual is to be reviewed and the scale of that revision.
- 1.4.2 With reference to the data from examiners, student feedback, and their own analysis, module coordinators document, on the Module Review Form, their judgment on the scale of the revision, if any, that a manual requires.
- 1.4.3 If the revision is deemed minor (*i.e.* it principally involves remedying typographical errors, and minor content errors and/or making minor updates), the module coordinator records this fact on the Module Review Form and consults with the editor on implementing the relevant changes, having regard to stock levels, production processes, etc.
- 1.4.4 If the revision is deemed major, the module coordinator, after recording this fact on the Module Review Form, must complete a Manual Review Form (provided in Appendix A).
- 1.4.5 The Manual Review Form will, among other things, call attention to broader contextual matters, including the textbook that accompanies the manual and to any online material that is to accompany it.
- 1.4.6 The completed Manual Review Form becomes the basis for future consultation and a record of activity amenable to review.
- 1.4.3 The Module Coordinator must commission an author to undertake the revision.
- 1.4.4 The review will follow the steps outlined above for creating a manual.

Below is a simple diagram that shows the course manual review cycle.

**Figure 1.1 Manual Review Cycle**



**APPENDIX A**

**MANUAL REVIEW FORM**

		<b>COMMENTS</b>
<b>TITLE</b>		
<b>PROGRAMME/YEAR</b>		
<b>LAST REVISION AND NATURE OF SUCH</b>		
<b>MODULE COORDINATOR</b>		
<b>AUTHOR</b>		
<b>PRIMARY AIMS AND SCALE OF THIS REVISION</b>		
<b>CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES</b>		
<b>BOOK TO ACCOMPANY</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> order <input type="checkbox"/> change	
<b>ONLINE MATERIAL TO ACCOMPANY</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
<b>NATURE OF ONLINE MATERIAL</b>		
<b>MODULE COORDINATOR DISCUSSION WITH AUTHOR/LECTURER</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> met on (date)	
<b>SAMPLE CHAPTER</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> received (date) <input type="checkbox"/> To standard	
<b>FINAL DEADLINE</b>		
<b>LESSONS DELIVERED (DATE)</b>		

<b>MODULE COORDINATOR REVIEW</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>To standard</b>	
<b>FEE</b>		
<i>EDITORIAL (TBC by Editor)</i>		
<b>TABLES/GRAPHS, PHOTOS, ETC.,</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>	
<b>COPYRIGHT ISSUES</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>	
<b>RESOURCES REQUIRED</b>	<i>Proofreading</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Typesetting</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	