KING'S INNS

Programme Development and Approval Policy

Lead staff member:	Dean
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01		
02		
03		

KINGS INNS 1541

THE HONORABLE SOCIETY OF KING'S INNS
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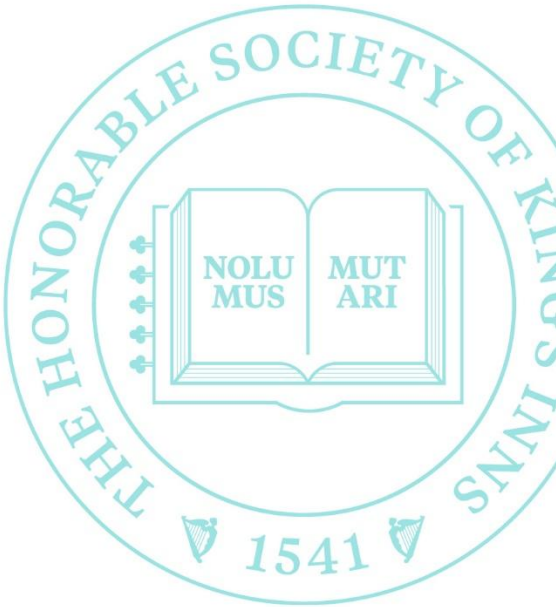

KINGS INNS 1541

1. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out a structured and systematic approach for the development and approval of new programmes of education and / or training at the Honorable Society of King's Inns (King's Inns).

2. Scope of Policy

The policy applies to the development and approval of all new programmes at King's Inns. This policy applies to all members of the King's Inns community engaged in the development and approval of new programmes at King's Inns.

3. Policy Statement

King's Inns is committed to ensuring that all new programmes are developed and approved in line with the current strategic priorities, as set out in the Strategic Plan for King's Inns, that they are financially viable, meet the required academic and / or professional standards, and are developed following a rigorous process which includes consultation with internal and external stakeholders, as appropriate.

All programmes of education provided by King's Inns are the intellectual property of the Honorable Society of King's Inns and approval will only be granted for a new programme on this basis.

4. Principles

4.1 Programmes will be developed to contribute towards fulfilment of the King's Inns overall vision, mission and strategic objectives, and where there are appropriate resources to deliver and support those programmes

4.2 Programmes are designed to meet the needs of prospective learners

4.3 Programmes leading to awards on the National Framework of Qualifications will be of a standard appropriate to or exceeding the award level to which they lead

4.4 King's Inns is responsible for the internal quality assurance of its programmes

4.5 Programmes will be monitored annually by the Programme Team

4.6 Programmes will be subject to a full review within five years.

5. Programme Development and Approval

5.1 Phase 1: Programme Initiation

5.1.1 Identification of new programme

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King's Inns will consider proposals for new programmes that are wholly or mainly relevant to the study of (a) law or (b) professional skills relevant to the legal professions or to associated professions.

New programmes may be identified either by King's Inns or by an external programme proposer. Potential for a new programme may occur following the identification of new opportunities or gaps in existing provision, engagement with stakeholders and / or market research by King's Inns. Where a new programme area is identified directly by King's Inns, a suitable expert in the relevant area will be identified by King's Inns and will be asked to complete programme proposal documents.

5.1.2 Completion of programme proposal documents

All new programme proposals begin with the completion of (a) a programme proposal (see Appendix 1) and (b) a detailed draft programme map – "the programme proposal documents". Programme proposals will not be considered unless both documents are provided.

The completed programme proposal and programme map will assist King's Inns in carrying out an initial assessment as to whether the proposed programme would align with the current strategic priorities of King's Inns, whether it is likely to be of suitable academic and / or professional quality, and whether it is likely to be financially viable.

5.1.3 Initial review of programme proposal documents

Programme proposal documents will be submitted in the first instance to the Dean of the School of Law in line with the Programme Development and Approval Procedure (see Appendix 3)

The programme proposal documents will be subject to an initial review by a programme proposal reviewer. The programme proposal reviewer could be an existing member of the academic staff at King's Inns, the Dean or a coordinator on any existing programme at King's Inns. This initial review will assess, on a preliminary basis, whether:

(1) the programme aligns with the overall objectives of King's Inns, the current strategic objectives as set out in the Strategic Plan and that the programme concerns the study of law and / or legal professional skills or related skills
(2) the programme is sufficiently different from programmes already provided or in development by King's Inns
(3) the programme proposal documents provide sufficient detail on the proposed programme to proceed to the next stage
(4) The programme proposal includes indicative credit volume, award level and award type, and
(5) there is likely to be a market for the proposed programme and that this market is sustainable.

Proposals that are deemed not to be financially or commercially viable will not be considered further.

The programme proposal reviewer will prepare a short report addressing each of the above criteria.

If the programme proposal reviewer considers that the proposed programme does not meet the criteria, the Dean will report to the School of Law Faculty Board and the programme proposer will be informed that King's Inns will not be proceeding with the proposal. In circumstances where a similar programme is already provided, or is in development by King's Inns, there is no need for the matter to proceed to the next phase, and the programme proposer can be informed immediately.

If further information is required, the programme proposer will be requested to provide additional information or to make amendments to the proposal. The programme proposal will not proceed until this has been done.

The completed programme proposal will be presented to the School of Law Faculty Board for an initial review and if satisfied with the proposal the School of Law Faculty Board will make a recommendation to the Education Committee to advance to the next stage, a review carried out by an Expert Panel.

5.1.4 Review of programme proposal by Expert Panel

Following the initial review phase and a recommendation from the School of Law Faculty Board, the Education Committee will decide if the programme proposal will be transmitted to an Expert Panel for review. The Expert Panel will be nominated by the Education Committee. Panel members are selected on the basis of expertise and experience in the area of law or skills relevant to the programme in question. Expert panels generally consist of 2-5 members.

The Expert Panel will consider the programme proposal and will provide a report to the Dean as to whether:

(1) The programme proposal meets the appropriate academic / professional standards, and, in the view of the panel, there is a market for such a programme, and the panel recommends to the Education Committee that the proposal should proceed to the programme development phase
(2) The programme proposal needs to be referred to the proposer for further information or amendments, or,
(3) The programme should not proceed further as it is not academically suitable and / or is not financially / commercially viable.

The Dean will report to the Education Committee on the view of the Expert Panel. The final decision as to whether to proceed to the programme development phase will be a matter for the Education Committee.

5.2 Phase 2: Programme Development

5.2.1 Once the proposal for a new programme has been approved, a coordinator with significant academic and / or practical experience in the field will be identified. Their appointment will be approved by the Education Committee

5.2.2 The coordinator will develop the curriculum for the programme

5.2.3 Appropriate learner characteristics will be identified having regard to King's Inns Access, Transfer and Progression Policy

5.2.4 The coordinator and the Dean may engage learner representatives and other stakeholders, as appropriate, during the programme development phase. They may avail of external expertise where this is necessary to fulfil the programme aims and learner needs

5.2.5 The curriculum will indicate the Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (MIPLOs) and, if applicable, the Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs).

5.2.6 The programme will be developed in line with the requirements of awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and associated policies

5.2.7 The programme content, teaching, learning and assessment strategies of individual modules will support the achievement of the MIPLOs

5.2.8 The programme will be aligned with an award level and type on the NFQ and there will be appropriate documentation in place to enable an application for external recognition of the award, should that be required

5.2.9 The curriculum will be designed to support the achievement of the intended learning outcomes

5.2.10 The teaching and learning strategy for the programme will be fully defined

5.2.11 Programmes with an online component will be designed, delivered and assessed consistent with King's Inns Blended and Online Learning Policy

5.2.12 Learner materials will be designed in advance of the programme commencing and will be in line with King's Inns specifications

5.2.13 Programme assessment strategy is consistent with the intended learning outcomes and developed in line with King's Inns Assessment of Learners Policy

5.2.14 Learner resources will be specified, including physical resources and online resources. If necessary, additional learner resources will be acquired

5.2.15 A plan will be put in place for the operation and management of the programme

5.2.16 The expertise required to deliver the programme will be identified.

5.3 Phase 3: Programme Approval

The detailed curriculum and other documentation following from the programme development phase will be presented to the School of Law Faculty Board for consideration. When the School of Law Faculty Board is satisfied that the appropriate level of detail has been provided, and the programme is ready for final approval, the School of Law Faculty Board will make a recommendation to the Education Committee. Final approval of the programme is reserved for the Education Committee.

A detailed budget and costs analysis will be undertaken by the programme proposer and the Dean. This analysis will be considered by the Senior Management Team (SMT) in relation to

costs and budgeting strategy. The SMT will recommend an appropriate programme fee to the Standing Committee. The programme fee will be set by the Standing Committee of King's Inns.

6. Publication of information on the programme

Detailed learner information will be published on the King's Inns website, to include information relating to the whether the programme leads to an award, the name of the awarding body, the title of the award and whether the award is recognised on the National Framework of Qualifications, programme outline, assessment of the programme, scheduling arrangements, delivery methodology, entry requirements (if applicable), relevant fees and details about the application process. Once a programme is viable in terms of the number of enrolled learners, the programme will launch.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

The Dean of the School of Law is the owner of this policy and will along with the Education Committee, School of Law Faculty Board, Registrar and Academic / Programme / Course Coordinator(s), as appropriate, oversee the implementation of this policy.

8. Monitoring and Review of Policy

The policy owner is responsible for monitoring implementation of the policy, ensuring that all associated documents are updated and current, and that the policy is reviewed as required.

The policy will be reviewed every three years from the date of first approval unless changes are required owing to legal, statutory and/or organisational change.

All policies and policy changes are approved by Council on the recommendation of Standing Committee. Policies relating to the School of Law will be reviewed in the first instance by the Education Committee before being recommended to Standing Committee.

9. Associated Documents

- Programme Proposal – Appendix 1
- Programme Development and Approval Procedure – Appendix 3

10 Related Policies

- Blended and Online Learning Policy
- Access, Transfer and Progression Policy
- Programme Monitoring and Review Policy
- Assessment of Learners Policy

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APPENDIX 1
NEW PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

The programme proposal document also provides an opportunity for the programme proposer to ascertain if they have fully considered all aspects of delivering a high-quality legal programme of this type.

A proposal for a new programme should address each of the headings below:

1. The proposed programme title
2. A short description of the proposed programme
3. Draft Minimum Intended Programme Learning Outcomes
4. Detailed information in respect of the overall aims and objectives of the programme, as well as overall learning outcomes
5. The indicative credit volume, award level and award type of the proposed programme
6. Summary of programme content
7. A detailed programme map
8. Information on the target audience
9. The current and projected future relevance of proposed programme
10. Rationale for King's Inns running this particular programme (e.g. relevance to recent law reform, transferrable skills etc.)
11. Proposed start date of programme
12. Proposed duration of programme
13. Timing / structure of programme and whether multiple different approaches to delivery / timetabling would be possible
14. Information as to who will deliver the programme in terms of materials design, teaching, coordination and guest speakers. Lists of speakers must be agreed with King's Inns.
15. Teaching and learning methodology (e.g. lectures, small group teaching, independent learning etc)?
16. The proposer's view as to whether the programme is suitable for online or hybrid / blended learning
17. Details of which online legal databases would be required for learners on the programme
18. Details of books would need to be available to learners on the programme and the ratio of learners / texts would be necessary
19. Details of which journals and / or periodicals would need to be available to learners on the programme?
20. Details of other learning resources required for the programme
21. Physical resources required - e.g. small group teaching rooms, large group teaching rooms etc.
22. Assessment method(s) appropriate for the programme – e.g. is it most appropriately assessed by written or oral examination, assignments, or by a combination thereof? Open or closed book examinations? Who will mark assessments in the first instance? Who might be suitable to externally examine a programme of this nature?
23. Programme promotion. What steps would need to be taken to promote this programme effectively

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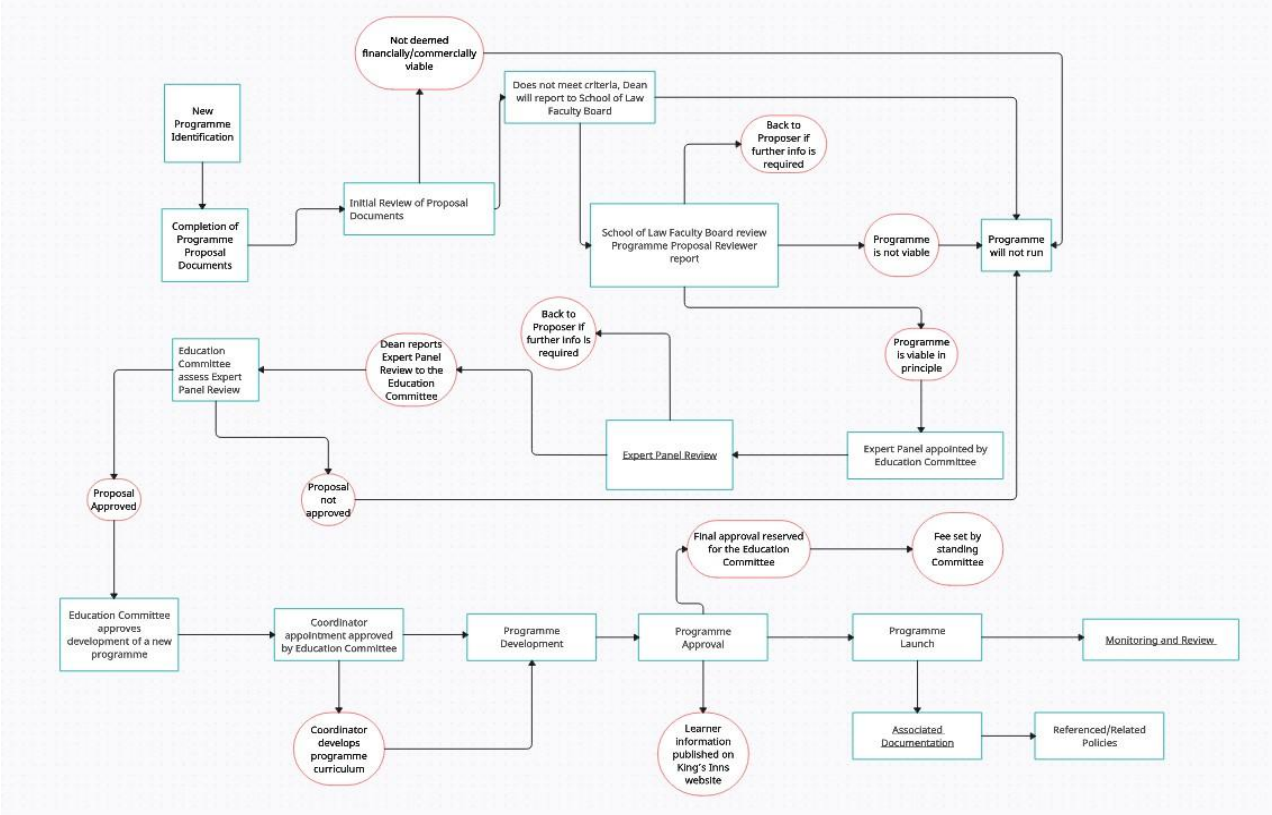
APPENDIX 2

FLOW CHART FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL



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APPENDIX 3
PROCEDURE FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL

No.	Stages of new programme development and approval	Date	Initials	Notes
1	Identification of potential new programme			
2	Dean decides if there is potential for development of the proposed programme. If there is no potential the process ends here.			
3	Initial programme proposal documents submitted to Dean			
4	Programme proposal reviewer appointed			
5	Report from programme proposal reviewer to Dean			
6	Dean reports to School of Law Faculty Board if a programme proposal is deemed unsuitable to advance further. Process ends here in this case.			
7	Initial review by School of Law Faculty Board of proposal documents and reviewers report.			
8	School of Law Faculty Board makes a recommendation to the Education Committee to allow the proposal to advance to the next stage, review by an Expert Panel			
9	Education Committee considers the programme proposal, reviewers report and recommendation from School of Law Faculty Board			
10	Education Committee decides whether to appoint an Expert Panel to review to proposal and address specified criteria			
11	Expert Panel submits report to the Dean			
12	Dean reports findings of Expert Panel to the Education Committee			
13	Education Committee decides whether to progress programme proposal to the Development Phase. Process can end here			

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14	Programme coordinator appointed to develop the programme documentation and materials			
15	School of Law Faculty Board reviews programme documentation			
16	When satisfied with the programme documentation is in order the School of Law Faculty Board recommends the programme for final approval to the Education Committee			
17	Education Committee approves the programme			
18	Detailed budget, resource implications including staffing for the programme prepared by the Dean			
19	Budget, resources etc discussed at SMT and an appropriate programme fee is proposed			
20	Fee for programme is agreed by Standing Committee			
21	Learner documentation prepared and uploaded onto website			
22	Marketing of programme undertaken			
23	Programme launches when there is a sufficient cohort of learners, and the programme is deemed viable			
24	Programme monitoring and review plans identified and scheduled			

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