Background on Proposed New "Fully Online Approval Form"

Purpose: This form would create a Senate approval process that would allow unit faculty (faculty of record, etc.) to add a fully online delivery option to an existing Senate-approved (residential) program. A "fully online program" is defined as any degree program, certificate program, major, or minor which is earned by a student who only enrolls in "fully online" courses. Programs would be required to submit a program change form in Curriculog and include the proposed new form as a separate upload, similar to what is required for faculty of record. In other words, programs can continue to do different types of things for one program via one approval process, with the details being provided in the associated uploads. (Proposals for new programs that will be delivered fully online would be required to submit the same form as an upload.) More detail about the form is described in its header.

Development: Distance Learning and the Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (OSPIE) approached the Senate Council Office about the creation of a new form for proposers of fully online programs. Representatives from those three offices and the chair of Senate's Committee on Distance Learning and e-Learning (SCDLeL) worked over the summer to develop a form designed to serve multiple needs. Obviously, the form could be used to document approval of distance learning delivery for a program, but it could also help standardize the information and processes used by the various campus offices who are involved. There are many, many campus areas that collaborate to ensure that the administrative side of the fully online program is correctly recorded and implemented.

The SCDLeL has reviewed the form and earlier in October voted unanimously to recommend that SC require the use of the draft form. The Committee also endorsed the planned use of the form as a Word attachment.

Justification: A new Senate approval process would create a faculty-governed mechanism to formally review and record UK's fully online program activity, which would positively impact reporting and accreditation requirements. Currently, this activity is an administrative process overseen by Distance Learning and OSPIE. In addition to maintaining faculty oversight of a curriculum's delivery modes, a formal process approved by the Senate Council would provide a more consistent and accurate way to share essential information among involved campus units and proposers. This would improve the processes by which programs will be included in systems such as SAP, admissions applications, and the UK Online Portal, as well as allow these programs to be eligible for the online tuition share.

Resources for Proposers: If SC recommends approval, resources will be created for proposers to help guide them through the process, similar to the help pages available for all of Senate's approval processes. One such resource will be a user-friendly database of courses that have been approved for distance learning delivery. This will provide a proposer with a simplified way of knowing what departments offer distance learning courses that may be a good fit for their fully online program, as well as provide an easy way to know who to contact for approval to borrow that course.