1. The role of the Critical Friend is to support the proposer of a new programme through the programme approval process by offering informal and independent advice and support.

2. The level of support needed will vary depending on the previous experience of the programme proposer. The Critical Friend should be appointed at the earliest possible date, as soon as possible after the Faculty Learning and Teaching Team have been made aware that a proposal is in development.

3. They should be willing to hold an initial meeting with the proposer and thereafter to offer an appropriate level of support through mutually convenient mechanisms (face to face, telephone, email).

4. Potential activities:
   a. In collaboration with the Faculty Learning and Teaching Team, offering guidance about the programme approval process (e.g. the level of detail required at each stage)
   b. Helping to construct a timeline for internal School approval so that Faculty deadlines can be met
   c. Commenting on draft documents at an early stage (e.g. strategic approval form, Programme Specifications, Regulations etc.), challenging any weak points, pointing out possible omissions and suggesting improvements
   d. Checking the internal consistency of the documentation
   e. Review the documentation from a student’s perspective e.g. to ensure that the programme regulations are viable

5. It is not expected that the Critical Friend will attend the Programme Approval Committee.

6. Critical Friends should have experience of the programme approval process, either as proposers themselves (ideally in a cognate discipline) or as members of programme approval panels. The Critical Friend would not be able to sit on the programme approval panel for a programme s/he had supported through the process.

7. Faculty Learning and Teaching Teams will offer detailed briefings on the new programme approval process (focussing on the underpinning rationale) to any staff acting as Critical Friends who have not had experience of the changed process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>This document is primarily intended for:</strong></th>
<th>Proposers of changes to degree programmes; Degree Programme Directors / Directors of Studies; School Administrators; Faculty Learning and Teaching Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Contact (for advice about the programme approval process)** | HASS: Christine O’Hara – christine.ohara@ncl.ac.uk, Ext. 83942  
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Cross-Faculty: Janice Trewick, Janice.Trewick@ncl.ac.uk, Ext. 87407 |
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