

Curriculum Design Guidance and Resources



General tips:

- Start holistically and work backwards from programme aims
- Consider the student learning journey
- Co-create the curriculum within the programme design team - avoid working in isolation

Stage 1

1. Agree a programme design team: this will normally include academic staff from a relevant area of study, including those who will be teaching on the programme, at least one external advisor and at least two students.
2. Consider external reference points, e.g. FHEQ levels, Subject benchmark statements, PSRB guidance (if relevant), Education for Sustainable Development guidance, etc.
3. Then consider internal guidance such as the Education Strategy.
4. Consider how the student will develop employability skills and competencies and how they will engage with work-based learning and graduate attributes within the programme. Consider BSU's Graduate Attributes.
5. Develop programme aims.
6. Then develop draft Intended Programme Learning Outcomes (ILOs) which are clear, realistic and achievable.
7. Start with subject-specific ILOs, then cognitive and intellectual. (Skills for life and work are set).
8. For UG programmes, start with L6 programme ILOs and then work backwards to L5 and L4.
9. Consider the BSU Assessment Policy and start planning a holistic assessment and feedback strategy for the programme. Assessment should align with the learning outcomes, and support the development of student assessment literacy, graduate attributes and educational experience.

Stage 2:

1. Plan modular level structure with reference to relevant BSU Academic Frameworks (e.g. UG Academic Framework or PGT Academic Framework). Consider how the student will navigate the modular structure. For UG programmes, consider how students will have access to Open Modules, and what functions these should play. Consider what resource implications there may be. If you're planning to share modules with other awards, ensure that you discuss this with relevant award/programme leaders in order to ensure that these arrangements are workable and sustainable.
2. Draft module level ILOs that are clear and achievable and that map to the programme ILOs.
3. Once you have clarity over the module structure, start to map the assessment across the programme. Consider the spread, weighting, timing and modes of assessment and how the feedback and feedforward will contribute to the student's learning journey.
4. Finally, draft a programme overview which encapsulates the programme's distinctiveness.

Glossary:

Assessment: Formative assessment is intended to monitor your learning and provide ongoing feedback to staff and students. If designed appropriately, it helps you to identify your strengths and weaknesses. Formative assessment can be tutor led, peer or self-assessment. Formative assessments usually carry no grade.

Assessment: Summative assessment is intended to evaluate student learning at the end of a module by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. Summative assessments are usually graded and can contribute to your overall degree classification. However, feedback from summative assessments can be used to guide your efforts and activities in subsequent modules.

Constructive alignment: this is the alignment of ILOs, assessment tasks and student learning activities. Student learning activities should develop the knowledge, skills and understanding expressed in the learning outcomes, and should be assessed across the programme. Assessment within a module should be aligned with the module level ILOs, which in turn should be aligned with the programme ILOs.

FHEQ: the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland presents the key reference point against which Higher Education providers are expected to align the academic standard of their degrees.

Framework: Academic Frameworks aim to facilitate your academic progression and transition through the various levels of study by providing a generic structure of degree programmes. For example, this allows for semesterised delivery through the Undergraduate Academic Framework. There are a number of other Frameworks including the Postgraduate Taught Framework.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs): ILOs describe what a student should be able to demonstrate by the end of the programme. These should reflect the key skills and knowledge that students on the programme should develop as these will form the basis of assessment. There are programme-level ILOs (which are quite broad) and module ILO (which are more specific). Module ILOs are mapped to the programme ILOs to show how they contribute to the overall programme.

Programme aims: these are the broad intentions of a programme and are stated in terms of the opportunities that the programme will offer students.

QAA: the Quality Assurance Agency is an independent body which monitors and advises on standards and quality in UK higher education.

Subject Benchmark Statement: this describes the nature of study and the academic standards expected of graduates in a specific subject area. The Statement (which is published by the QAA) shows what graduates might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their studies.

Definitive Programme Documents

Definitive Programme Document (DPD): this outlines what you can expect from your programme. The key components of a DPD include:

Programme Overview: brief overview of the programme.

Programme aims: see above

Programme intended learning outcomes: all students must achieve these to be awarded the degree. For undergraduate degrees these are outlined for each level of study which also helps to see how a student progresses through a programme.

Programme content: this outlines all of the modules that make up the course and their status (i.e. if a student must take the module or if there are module choices).

Graduate Attributes: the University sets eight attributes which will relate to all programmes. The DPD table outlines how they are met in the specific programme and are a key component of programme design.

Programme structure: this sets out the structure of the programme and enables programme design teams to look at the balance of modules between semesters or trimesters and of optional modules. It is also useful to see the order of modules and how students will progress through a programme.

Map of Intended Learning Outcomes: this helps programme design teams to map the modules to the programme ILOs. As students need to have met all of the ILOs at each level, this is a useful check to see where any missing components can be built into modules.

Map of Summative Assessment Tasks by Module: this outlines the different types of coursework, practical and written examinations for all modules and helps the programme design teams to see the range and progress of assessment across modules.

Module descriptors: these set out more details of specific modules including contact hours (there are central guides for this) the outline syllabus, teaching and learning activities, module ILOs, and formative and summative assessments, reading lists and preparatory work.

Curriculum design resources

External Policies and regulatory resources

- [FHEQ](#)
- QAA Quality Code: [course design and development](#)
- [QAA Subject Benchmark Statements](#)

Internal strategies and policies

- [Education Strategy](#)
- [Assessment and Feedback Policy](#)
- [Undergraduate Academic Framework](#)
- [Taught Postgraduate Framework](#)
- [Foundation Year Framework](#)
- [Initial Teacher Training Academic Framework](#)
- [CPD Framework](#)
- [Qualifications Credit Framework](#)
- Framework exemption criteria
- Definition of contact time

Guidance on curriculum design

- Introduction to holistic programme design
- [Guide to student co-creation](#)
- Introduction to inclusive programme design (link to [Advance THE Inclusive Curriculum Design](#))
- Introduction to constructive alignment
- Guide to writing programme aims
- Guide to writing programme ILOs
- Guide to writing module ILOs
- Principles for the development of effective assessment and feedback
- Indicative list of assessment types
- Guide to technology enhanced learning
- Guide to completing the programme documentation

Enterprise, entrepreneurship and employability within the Curriculum:

- Embedding graduate attributes
- [Employability Strategy](#)

- [Advance HE Entrepreneurship and Education Framework](#)
- [Entrecomp Framework](#)

Education for Sustainable Development:

- [QAA / Advance HE Guidance for Education for Sustainable Development](#)

Useful literature:

Fraser, S. and Bosanquet, A.M. (2003) "The curriculum. That is just a unit outline isn't it?" in *Studies in Higher Education*, 31 (3). Pages 269-284 [Doi: 10.1080/03075070600680521]

Teaching for quality learning

Moon, J. (2002) "A map of module development". In J. Moon, *The Module and Programme Development Handbook: A Practical Guide to Linking Levels, Outcomes and Assessment Criteria*. London. Routledge Falmer

Moon, J. (2002) "The sum of the parts: some considerations on working at programme level". In J. Moon, *The Module and Programme Development Handbook: A Practical Guide to Linking Levels, Outcomes and Assessment Criteria*. London. Routledge Falmer