Designing Curricula
Why are you here?
Agenda setting:

- What questions do you have?
- What do you need and what might colleagues need?
- What concerns you and others about curriculum design?
- Other things you would like to have addressed?
For consideration

A. What makes for effective:

- Curriculum design?
- Programme Leadership?
- Management and Monitoring?
- Review and evaluation? (QA, QE)
- Modifications?
- Assessment?
- Team working and collegial support?
- Module design/writing?

B. What common problems and challenges emerge?

C. Location of technical information and support
What makes for effective curriculum design?
‘Coherent, aligned university curricula – generic principles in design and delivery’ Constructive Alignment and place and role of QME

Overarching Aims – Why such a programme? .... And Market?
Curriculum Planning and Curriculum Reviewing

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**PLANNING**

- **Programme Aims**
  - General; overarching flavour of what you want the learners to have achieved by the end of the programme

- **Programme Outcomes**
  - Specific and FHEQ related. Align with the level and expected outcomes for the award and generic skills. Align with expected outcomes for the subject/field. Aligned with aims.

- **Module Learning Outcomes**
  - Specific to each module/unit of credit
  - Measurable/assessable by the assessment type in the module
  - Achievable (in time allocated)
  - Matched to teaching strategies

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**REVIEWING**

All require leadership, coordination and teamwork
• i.e. model of sequentially assembling a curriculum
• Alignment of Aims; Programme learning outcomes: Module learning outcomes
• Alignment of teaching for learning
• Key in considerations for completion of curriculum templates and in consideration of available guidance
Important questions:

What are aims, programme learning outcomes and module learning outcomes?

How can they be defined by level using level descriptors?
Alignment of Aims, Programme Learning Outcomes and Module Learning Outcomes – How would you know if you have a coherent, mapped curriculum?

Does the curriculum align and add up?

Aims = Programme Outcomes = Sum of the Module Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Aims – Broad Overarching Statements (QAA Subject Benchmark Statements)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme Outcomes – FHEQ, QAA Subject Benchmark Statements</td>
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<td>Module Learning Outcomes and LEVELNESS re the LEVEL of the award</td>
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## Mapping/Matrix – Coherence and Progression … Ronseal Test …… for alignment

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<tr>
<th>Programme Aims</th>
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<th>Outcomes by Level</th>
<th>Modules Contributing to Achievement of Outcomes</th>
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To align programme aims, outcomes, and modules with the intended learning outcomes (ILOs).
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Testing alignment by mapping Programme Outcomes to Module Learning Outcomes (LOs)

• This can be done in planning a curriculum by writing the module learning outcomes with clear attention to the Programme Outcomes

• Mapping can/should also be ‘re-done’ in review, to check if a curriculum adds up, so the ILOs map to make the Programme Outcomes.
As ‘Learners’ Where are students arriving from

Module (Level) & Credit Value

Where are students going to?

Where does module ‘fit’ in whole ‘programme’

L – T - A – R – E = Constructive Alignment

Essential Skills and Knowledge

• Learning Outcomes
• Content / Resources
• TLA Strategy
• Assessment Strategy

Coherence
• Progression
• Support /guidance
• Formative activities and assessment

Overview
How does one know if a curriculum is aligned and coherent?

Some Key questions:
Are aims, programme outcomes and module learning outcomes in alignment? Does the mapping work?

Are the modules taught/delivered in a logical order recognising any need for sequence and progression in knowledge and skills? (e.g.s. Study skills, information literacy skills, communication skills)

Is the teaching matched to any definition of progression? Are there expectations of growing autonomy and independence of learners built in as the programme progresses?

Do plans and structures for feedback on assessment focus on development and enhancement of students learning?

Are there mechanisms to check for alignment and coherence as the curriculum is being delivered? (Evaluation and review – Quality management and enhancement)
Acid test Questions:

‘Where does your module fit in the curriculum? How was it derived? Why is at the ascribed level?'
Some Key issues:

- Location of a module within a programme/pathway/award *(mapping – alignment, coherence and progression ‘into’ and ‘out of’)*

- Intended Learning outcomes (ILOs) and ‘assessability’ (*F for P*)

- ‘Levelness’ (*Academic Standards*)

- Assessment and match with ILOs and ‘inclusivity’

- Relationships with any overarching TLA strategy (*coherence*)

- PSRB requirements
EHU Curriculum Framework/s:

• Are “Enabling yet constraining”

• “Focus on what matters”

• “Are derived from evidence bases (SoTL) and outcomes from numerous QA and reflective process”
What do/does the framework/s consist of?

• A series of ‘lenses’ (Common to UG and PG)
• Each lens is a series of questions which must be addressed.
• i.e. In curriculum design, in validation and in Periodic Review
Framework Lenses (UG and PG Commonality)

1. Graduate attributes

2. Inductions and transitions

3. Teaching, Learning and Assessment including

4. Personal tutoring

5. Personal Development Planning

6. Learning Literacies

7. Work-Related and Work-Based Learning

8. Technology-Enhanced Learning and Distance Learning

9. Employability

10. International Dimensions

11. Education for Sustainable Development
Each lens has a set of enabling yet constraining questions to respond to (see AQDU web pages):

Each then has challenges and expectations of key aspects of each lens that must be considered
What makes for effective curriculum design?

• Market research
• Design down from the big idea – avoid the danger of retro-fitting modules
• Teamwork (including AQDU, CLT and others as appropriate)
• Engaging employers and students
• Engagement with the Curriculum Frameworks and the student experience and ‘context’
• Validation preparation (….. Know what your module contributes to the whole)

……….. What makes for ineffective curriculum design?
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http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/aqdu/section-1-design-requirements/udf-the-student-learning-experience/

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QMH Chapter 6: Assurance of Quality of TLA - Responsibilities of ‘programme leadership’ include:

1. Monitoring student recruitment, retention and progression at award level;
2. Providing programme-level guidance and support to module leaders and tutors;
3. Ensuring appropriate communication with students including induction and guidance for transition between levels/years;
4. Ensuring programme assessment is conducted appropriately and securely including internal and external moderation and submission of module marks to assessment boards;
5. Ensuring all modules within the programme have appropriate external examiner coverage;
6. Operation of module evaluation questionnaires, programme boards and Student-Staff Consultative Fora including course-level student representation;
7. Overseeing arrangements for personal tutoring and Personal Development Planning;
8. Advising students on module options, careers information and guidance and procedures for extenuating mitigating circumstances, deferral of assessment, re-assessment, intercalation and appeals;
9. Point of contact for programme-related complaints;
10. Producing programme handbooks and reviewing and updating module and programme specifications and handbooks to reflect minor and major programme modifications;
11. Contributing programme-level evaluation to departmental annual monitoring and periodic review.
How are you?

Q and A
Dr Chris Lawton,
BA (Hons), MA, PGCert, PhD, MAUA.

Academic Quality Officer
(Monitoring & Development)
Academic Quality & Development Unit

Curriculum Design Myths:
An Academic Quality & Development Unit Perspective
Common Curriculum Design Myths:

• QAA Subject Benchmark Statements – what are they, and what do they have to do with Programmes & Modules?

• Good design vs efficient design?

• How & When to include inclusivity in teaching, learning & assessment.

• Key contacts around the University

• Curriculum development resources.
QAA Subject Benchmark Statements

• Part of the Quality Code - Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards.

• 3 Categories: Bachelors with Hons, Masters, and Health Professional.

• Available from www.qaa.ac.uk

• Intended to assist those involved in programme design, delivery and review.
QAA Subject Benchmark Statements

Set out expectations about degree standards for a particular subject:

• Describe what gives a discipline its coherence and identity.
• Define the graduate skills and abilities required for understanding/competence in a given subject.

Not a national curriculum – rather a flexible, conceptual framework establish by communities of academic subject experts.
Good Curriculum Design
Vs
Efficient Curriculum Design
A false problem
Problem:
Everyone typically wants to teach modules on their own research interests, but this can lead to inefficient curriculum design, teaching overload (no time for research, etc), small student cohorts & a poor student experience.

Key Question:
How do we avoid designing more modules than we need, without restricting colleagues’ freedom to choose what they teach?

Some Solutions:
Module Sharing, Co-teaching, & Shell Modules.
Using QAA Subject Benchmarks in designing a high quality & efficient curriculum.

CASE STUDY:
BA (Hons) Philosophy.
Thematic strands defined in the QAA subject benchmark
BA (Hons) Philosophy: Level 5 Module Diet

- PHI2000: Formal & Philosophical Logic
- PHI2002: Modern Metaphysics
- PHI2003: Knowledge & Knowing
- PHI2004: Minds, Brains, & Computers
- PHI2001: Ethics & Moral Philosophy
PHI2001: Ethics & Moral Philosophy

A shell module where a module leader can use a range of different vehicles to deliver the same validated:

• Module Title
• Indicative Content
• Module Learning Outcomes
• Assessment Strategy

• Flexible – can deliver different topics within this conceptual framework (i.e. different aspects of ethics/moral philosophy)

• Academically Robust – clear links to PLOs, & Benchmarks.

• Practically Robust – Not tied to a specific member of staff.

• Other advantages…
Designing for Inclusivity
Principles of inclusive curriculum design:


**Anticipatory:**

It is proactive in considering the entitlements of all students in the design and delivery of all activity, considering prospective and existing students as well as the whole student life cycle, from admissions through induction, the course and beyond. Adopting an anticipatory approach reduces the need for reactive and individualised responses that can arise when inclusive issues have not been considered at the design phase.
Flexible:
Open, versatile and responsive to an evolving student population, and to changes in circumstances that may require adaptations to the timetable or delivery format to accommodate student availability, for instance blended learning.

Accountable:
Encourages staff and students to be responsible for the progress they have made against equality objectives and actions agreed.
Collaborative:
Builds on partnership between students, colleagues and other stakeholders including professional bodies, sector bodies, international partners and employers to enrich the curriculum content and relevance. It is important that staff are receptive to feedback recognising that developing inclusive provision is an ongoing process that benefits from the active involvement of all participants.
**Transparent:**
Makes clear the reason for design decisions by increasing general awareness of the benefits for all and reduces the possibility of misunderstandings based on perceived preferential treatment.

**Equitable:**
The processes and procedures used for students are the same and decisions are made in a fair, open and transparent way.
Key Messages:

• Inclusivity is not an afterthought or post-hoc adjustment – there must be a clear connection between the curriculum design process and the eventual module delivery.

• (Broadly speaking) an inclusive curriculum design approach promotes student success by:
  ▪ Taking into account students’ educational, cultural and social background and experience as well as the presence of any physical or sensory impairment and their mental well-being.
  ▪ Ensuring an anticipatory response to equality in teaching, learning & assessment.
Key Contacts
Academic Quality & Development Unit (AQDU)
- UK Quality Code
- Quality Processes
- Curriculum Design
- E-VAL Access, Training, & Support.

Centre for Learning & Teaching (CLT)
- Pedagogy
- Assessment Criteria
- Curriculum Design

Learning Services
- Student Support
- TEL

Academic Registry
- Academic Regulations
- Module & Programme Codes
Curriculum Development Resources
QAA Subject Benchmarks: www.qaa.ac.uk

Higher Education Academy: www.hea.ac.uk

Curriculum Frameworks: (via the Go Portal)

E-VAL: (via the Go Portal)

Quality Management Handbook: (via the Go Portal)

Academic Regulations: (via the Go Portal)

Learning & Teaching Day: (via CLT & Staff Development)