

Curriculum Design Policy

Purpose

The University seeks to develop courses and programmes of study that provide a high quality educational experience which exceeds the minimum requirements of the [OfS quality and standards conditions of registration](#).

The purpose of this Policy is to set out the key principles for the design of curricula.

Overview

The Policy sets out the five key principles which constitute the University's approach to curriculum design.

Scope

All staff, particularly those involved in the development and review of courses.

The Policy

The University aims to provide a high quality educational experience for all its students which exceeds the minimum requirements of the [OfS quality and standards conditions of registration](#).

Our curricula reflect our values and seek to provide students with the opportunities to fulfil their potential and a foundation for long-term study and progression to rewarding employment. We aim to produce graduates who are engaged, resilient and lifelong learners.

The following set of principles, which are informed by the University's [Learning and Teaching Strategy 2020-2025](#), provide a framework within which these aims can be fulfilled.

Curricula at the University are based on five principles. The curriculum is designed to be:

1. learning-centred
2. constructively aligned
3. reflective of sector recognised standards
4. inclusive
5. future focussed.

These principles guide the development of the curriculum for new and revised courses and form the basis for the academic consideration of course curricula through the approval process.

1 Learning-centred

1.1 The curriculum is learning-centred when the learning outcomes, learning activities including assessment, learning resources, pedagogy and staff are focussed on supporting and enabling active learning engagement by all students.

1.2 This involves:

- A focus on learning design in relation to planning the curriculum across levels and between levels
- Consideration of learning across the whole of student learning time (not just contact time) on a weekly basis
- Opportunities for flexibility and personalisation to meet individual learning needs
- Structured and purposeful personal academic support to review and reflect on learning goals and progress.

1.3 Resources*

[Assessment policy](#) (University of Worcester)

[Principles and guidance for design of undergraduate courses](#) (University of Worcester)

[Principles and guidance for the design of Foundation Degrees](#) (University of Worcester)

[Personal academic tutoring](#) (University of Worcester)

[Designing learning and assessment in a digital age](#) (Jisc)

[Hallmarks of success: Student-centred learning and teaching](#) (QAA; membership login required)

2 Constructively aligned

2.1 A constructively aligned curriculum focuses on developing students' knowledge, skills and capabilities to ensure they can successfully achieve the intended learning outcomes of the course, and realise the graduate attributes.

2.2 This involves:

- Ensuring the coherence of course modules in terms of a planned developmental educational learning experience
- Increasing the level of challenge, complexity and independence over time
- Planned opportunities for students to develop skills, apply learning and engage with formative assessment and feedback
- Graduate attributes informing the intended learning outcomes of the course, which in turn inform the module learning outcomes, learning activities and assessments.

2.3 The University graduate attributes are:

- **Social responsibility:** Graduates who are globally and socially responsible, culturally aware and understand the ethical impact of decisions
- **Reflective and resilient lifelong learning:** Graduates who are resilient and aspirational, intellectually curious and critically reflective lifelong learners
- **Problem solving:** Graduates who can employ analytical, creative and evaluative skills to investigate problems and propose viable solutions
- **Teamwork and effective communication:** Graduates who can work in teams and communicate effectively to a range of audiences
- **Digital citizenship:** Graduates who have high degrees of digital capability to actively and responsibly create, communicate and collaborate online.

2.4 Resources*

[Guide to writing learning outcomes and developing assessment criteria](#) (University of Worcester)

[Guidance on embedding graduate attributes in the curriculum](#) (University of Worcester)

[QAA Higher Education Toolkit Part 8: Course design and development](#) (QAA; membership login required)

[Student engagement through partnership in higher education](#) (AdvanceHE)

[Hallmarks of Success: Course, design approval and management](#) (QAA; membership login required)

3 Reflective of sector recognised standards

3.1 The curriculum reflects sector recognised standards when the learning outcomes, relevant discipline based knowledge, understanding, and skills, including transferable skills, and assessment activities, criteria and grading practices are articulated at the appropriate level for the modules and for the award overall.

3.2 This involves:

- Ensuring that the threshold standards as set out in the HE qualification descriptors are aligned with the minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for the award
- Using the sector recognised classification descriptors, as integrated into the University generic assessment and grading criteria, as a benchmark for assessment and grading criteria
- Taking account of QAA [Subject benchmark statements](#), the [UK Quality Code](#) and [qualification characteristics statements](#) as appropriate to the level of the award.

3.3 Resources

[Sector recognised standards](#) (OfS)

[Frameworks for Higher Education Qualification of Degree Awarding Bodies](#) (QAA)

[Assessment policy](#) (University of Worcester)

[Generic grade descriptors levels 4-7](#) (University of Worcester)

[Grade descriptors level 8 \(PGR\)](#) (University of Worcester)

4 Inclusive

4.1 An inclusive curriculum is one which provides all students, regardless of background, personal or protected characteristics, with an equal opportunity to achieve the learning outcomes of their course, and positively values diversity.

4.2 This means that the course:

- Anticipates recruitment of students from diverse backgrounds and with a range of cultural and protected characteristics
- Plans the content, delivery and assessment of the learning to reflect the principles of diversity and equality and ensuring the curriculum is relevant and accessible for all
- Has a curriculum that is globally, socially, and culturally inclusive and develops the intercultural competencies of students
- Is reviewed against the principles of inclusion as set out in the Inclusion toolkit.

4.3 Resources*

[Inclusion toolkit](#) (University of Worcester)

[Equality, diversity and inclusion](#) (AdvanceHE)

[Internationalising higher education](#) (AdvanceHE)

[Diversity, inclusivity and accessibility: Creating inclusive subject learning communities](#) (QAA; membership login required)

[Enhancing inclusion and accessibility](#) (QAA)

5 Future focused

5.1 A future focussed curriculum enables students to develop their employability and career readiness and to develop the knowledge, skills and qualities needed to make a positive contribution to sustainability in local and global communities.

5.2 This means that the course:

- Prepares students for employability, in providing opportunities for students to participate in **work-based learning, work placement or other work-related learning**
- Ensures learning and teaching is research inspired, ie, is informed by relevant and current **research, scholarship and professional practice**, and promotes student engagement with, the research process and its application
- Embeds the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) in the curriculum to promote ethical and environmental responsibility, including an understanding of sustainability in its widest definition.

5.3 Resources*

[University Graduate attributes: guidance and toolkit](#) (University of Worcester)

[Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship in Higher Education](#) (Advance HE)

[Student engagement through partnership in higher education](#) (AdvanceHE)

[Education for sustainable development](#) (QAA; membership login required)

***QAA Membership Resources** is a site for QAA Members to access a wealth of resources including briefings, case studies, country reports, research outcomes and materials relating to our events. The University of Worcester holds membership with QAA and everyone with a University email address can access the site by completing the [registration form](#), which is very simple and quick.

Approval/Review Table

Item	Notes
Version Number	2.1
Date of Approval	September/October 2022
Approved by	LTSEC/Academic Board
Effective from	October 2022
Policy Officer	Director of Quality and Educational Development
Department	Quality and Educational Development
Review Date	July 2025
Last reviewed	August 2022
Policies superseded by this version	Curriculum Design Policy, v1.13
Equality Impact Assessment	N/A
Accessibility Checked	August 2022

Recent changes

Committee	Date	Change
LTSEC Academic Board	September 2022 October 2022	Policy completely reviewed and updated.
N/A	March 2024	Links to resources updated