THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLTON UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Issued by: the Learning Enhancement & Professional Development Unit
24 October 2011 edition
Approved by Senate at: 24 October 2011

CONTENTS

The University of Bolton Undergraduate Curriculum Framework

1   ACADEMIC REVIEW

The Higher Education sector is facing unprecedented change and challenge through the introduction of new Government policy agendas, reforms to the funding of the Higher Education sector and the introduction of increased student fees.

In the light of these radical changes the University is preparing itself to face some of the uncertainties and the challenges ahead through an Academic Review which will serve to augment areas where there is evidence of success and consider new areas with potential for growth.

In the University of Bolton Strategic Plan (2010-2016) we aim to "provide programmes which meet the local, regional, national and international needs of students and their employers".

Under the strategic theme of Curriculum and Programme Change objectives are to:

 "Review our programmes to ensure that they are attractive, relevant and well matched to the needs of students and their employers. They will have flexible methods of delivery and locations and will consistently achieve high rates of student satisfaction, retention and career outcomes.

Continue to refresh our course portfolio, anticipating demand and building on our strengths in delivering vocational and professionally accredited provision.

Ensure that concepts of sustainability and global citizenship are incorporated into the curriculum.

Incorporate onto all undergraduate and post graduate programmes employability skills and career preparation, along with career management and development for students in employment".

(University of Bolton Strategic Plan 2010 – 2016 pg 11)

This action will enable us to take on the challenges of the future with confidence and to retain a sustainable University which maintains our traditional values of widening participation serving local, regional and international student communities.

The Academic Review is a determinant part of the academic repositioning of the University which includes the specification of a University of Bolton Undergraduate Curriculum framework.

2   UNDERGRADUATE MODULAR DEGREE FRAMEWORK

The University introduced an Undergraduate Modular Degree framework to facilitate the introduction of modularisation and semesterisation of programmes into the Higher Education sector over ten years ago.

Since then and over time some programme curricula may have digressed from the original framework e.g. the introduction of additional modules to provide increased optionality; the validation of programmes/modules outside of the 20 credit framework; assessment loads

not aligning with assessment norms, all of which have led to a diversion from the standard Undergraduate Modular Degree framework.

The Academic Review is an opportunity for all Academic Managers, Programme teams and module tutors to review and re evaluate each module and programme, against the framework and to enhance and refresh the curriculum design of each programme to be offered to our prospective students.

3 OBJECTIVES OF THE BOLTON UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The University is seeking through the Bolton Undergraduate Curriculum Framework to develop:

- prescriptive programme curriculum with reduced options which will provide students with a cohort/course identity and improve efficiency of delivery

- meaningful and transparent integration of learning outcomes across modules and across the whole programme

- the development of a cohesive and coherent programme with explicit alignment in relation to: learning outcomes; assessment criteria; a range of appropriate assessment tools, appropriate assessment load(s)

- an approach to assessment which is designed to encourage and value learning and development by placing **assessment at the heart** of the learning journey through the greater use of formative assessment, self and peer assessment methods

- a standard undergraduate core curriculum which has three main identifiable strands running through the curriculum: Subject knowledge and skills, employability and professional development, and the three Bolton values: Internationalisation, environmental sustainability and awareness, social, public and ethical responsibility

- the Personal tutoring scheme being integrated with Personal Development Planning for students and embedded within credited modules

- increasing flexible modes of delivery for students who are part time and off campus

- innovation in the use of technology to enhance learning for all our students

4 MAIN REQUIREMENTS

The Academic Review requires that all programmes are reviewed and judged against a series of expectations as laid down in previous papers. However, a broader requirement is to put in place a curriculum framework which simplifies the management, administration, teaching and assessment process for both staff and students and provides the structure within which programme teams can plan their curriculum content. Set out below are some key requirements which the University will apply to all undergraduate programmes if they are to be offered from September 2012.

5 CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

5 .1 The University will operate a standard 20 credit module format for all undergraduate programmes. Double modules will be allowed where appropriate, for example to cover projects/dissertations.

120 credits per year will constitute a full-time programme and normally 80 credits per year as a standard part-time programme. Other part-time loads will be allowed but they should be closely related to funding support and fee income i.e. between 25% – 75% to attract the student loan.

All programmes will identify the fixed route of modules which will constitute a part time programme.

Where ever possible all modules will be designed as stand-alone. Prerequisite modules at any level and between levels will be allowed only in exceptional cases and will need to be individually justified.

5.2 Programmes must identify how they are using the distinctive characteristics of on-line learning to enrich the learning experience for students.

Faculties should also consider which of their programmes could be offered on an intensive basis (2 years for a full-time degree and equivalent reduction in time period but with the same learning hours for a part-time degree, Foundation Degree, HNC/D etc.) using a trimester pattern of delivery. Programmes must have a flexible delivery plan to demonstrate how they will develop additional flexibility as part of their appeal to different student markets.

6 CORE CURRICULUM

There will be an expectation that the programme will be made up of predominantly core modules with limited option choice. Where option modules are proposed programme teams will be required to provide an academic rationale and justify option choice within the programme.

All programmes should have a core curriculum with three identifiable main strands running right through the curriculum structure:

- Subject Knowledge and Information/Study Skills (including Research Methods)
- Employability and Professional Development (using the list of Employability Skills defined in the University's Employability Statement, including work-related learning and placement opportunities)
- Bolton Values:

  - Internationalisation (expressed through curriculum content and /or arrangements for exchanges, visits etc)

  - Environmental Sustainability and awareness (expressed through curriculum content, methods of delivery, and opportunities for student activities)

  - Social, Public and Ethical Responsibility (expressed through curriculum content, opportunities for student activities)

There will be an expectation that these three strands can be explicitly identified, quantified and assessed as part of the Bolton Curriculum, regardless of the programme chosen. (Please see Appendix One for further guidance.)

7 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (PDP), PERSONAL TUTORING AND INDUCTION

The Personal Tutoring scheme will be integrated with a revised University PDP scheme to ensure that all students leave with an electronic record of their academic and personal development learning, together with awards/accreditation achieved, which will ultimately be contained in the Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) when it is introduced.

Wherever possible Course teams should incorporate the Personal tutoring strand and Personal Development Planning for students, into credit bearing modules.

This may also be a consideration for Induction activities.

This integration of Personal Tutoring into the curriculum is in response to the experience and feedback on the implementation of the Personal Tutoring framework (2010–2011) and to increase and maximize scheduled contact time per module as an outcome of the KIS.

8   INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

For each 20 credit module there will be no more than 5 intended learning outcomes.

Individual learning outcomes should not normally be assessed more than once within a module. Where possible there should be a limited overlap of learning outcomes between different modules on the programme and at any given level of the programme.

9 ASSESSMENT

There will be a maximum of two summative assessments for each 20 credit module (which should not in turn be sub-divided into many different elements of assessment).

There will be an emphasis in assessment design and in assessment feedback mechanisms so that assessment is seen as an integral part of the learning process and that opportunity for formative assessment and feedback should be provided within each module.

There will be a range of different assessment methods used across the programme with the maximum module assessment norm/load being equivalent to a 5000 word essay.

To encourage 'assessment for learning' and to create further opportunities for formative assessment   Course teams may wish to consider a variable/reduced assessment norm/load at different levels e.g. equivalent to 3,000 words at level HE4; equivalent to 4,000 words at level HE 5 with the maximum module assessment norm/load being equivalent to a 5,000 words at Level HE6.

10   MODULE ASSESSMENT GRADES

All modules should be assessed on the basis of the achievement of an average pass mark of 40% across all components of assessment except in exceptional cases e.g. where professional bodies may stipulate otherwise.

11   RESEARCH METHODS MODULES

Where possible Research Methods modules should be offered across more than one programme. Faculties should organise and timetable Research Methods modules so that

they can be shared between programmes and not delivered as separate occurrences unless numbers warrant it.

12   TRIMESTER CALENDAR

The University plans to provide the opportunity for programmes to take a trimester calendar approach by 2012 (the length and start/finish date of trimesters will be determined by Senate) and the assumption will be that all single modules will be one semester in length and be assessed within the semester, unless there are exceptional reasons for this not to be the case.

13   CONTACT HOURS

Course teams are asked to consider ways of maximising the use of Scheduled contact time as a percentage of the total learning time for each module (as this will be a key indicator in the Key Information Set (KIS) data).

Although this contact time needs to be 'scheduled and supervised' it does not necessarily have to be physically 'face to face'.

It does however have to be part of the learning hours within a credit bearing module

"Contact time may also take a virtual rather than a face–to–face form, through the use of e mail, email discussion groups, virtual learning environments (VLES) and other technology – aided means."

("Explaining contact hours: Guidance for institutions providing public information about higher education in the UK" Quality Assurance Agency for HE, August 2011 pg 12)

There is flexibility within this, to develop a front loading scheduled class time per level – potentially adopting a variable intensity of scheduled class time dependent on level of study to develop a greater independence of study at HE Level 6, where appropriate, within the above requirements.

14   TIMETABLING POLICY

In 2011, the University introduced a Timetabling policy to maximise the use of the Estate and the working week and make it possible for programmes to be offered on a part-time basis on a day/evening, evening only, weekend or block basis.

Contact hours will normally be timetabled as two hour blocks.

In addition each programme will have a Personal tutoring strand which will be timetabled and accredited within module(s) to align with the University Personal Tutoring Policy.

The expectation would be that no undergraduate module occurrence should run with less than 12 students enrolled.

15   THE STUDENT CHARTER AND KEY INFORMATION SET (KIS)

The University will introduce a new Student Charter. This will spell out the entitlement and the responsibility of students and also lay down clear expectations of their attendance and obligations in terms following their programmes and submitting assessments on time.

By 2012 the University will be required to publish on its website the following minimum **Key Information Set (KIS)** for all programmes as required by HEFCE by 2012 (NB some of this information would be at University level but some of it is programme specific and requires detailed knowledge of the programme and its student output):

- Student Satisfaction with the Course/Subject (NSS results)
- Views on the Student Union
- Cost of Student Residencies
- Tuition fees and private rental market
- Destination of students six months after completing their course (including employment and further study)
- Average salary six months after completing the course
- Professional bodies which recognise the course
- Number of contact hours and student directed study hours expected per week and the mix of learning and teaching methods
- The mix of assessment methods used on the course

16   CONTINUUM OF PROGRESSION

Programmes should be able to demonstrate how they articulate with those offered at pre-entry level and, where appropriate, intermediate level (in terms of the credit granted for entry with advanced standing).

They should also be able to demonstrate how they articulate with higher level qualifications in a range of selected subject areas so that students can access a lifelong learning and professional development stream appropriate to their changing requirements without having to move outside the University.

The aim should be to offer a continuum of progression within the University covering e.g. Intermediate (Foundation Degree/HNC/HND) Degree (Standard and intensive delivery) and Postgraduate programmes (Postgraduate and post experience).

To facilitate this all Foundation Degrees/HNC/Ds when validated should have a degree level top up identified alongside them.

With a more prescriptive/directed approach to programme design, programme teams are invited to consider and validate a 'fall back' position/title of award for students who do not progress on the validated programme

APPENDIX ONE

CORE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK - BOLTON VALUES

Internationalisation

The rationale for including Internationalisation as a core value within the curriculum across the University's academic offer is that we have every reason to expect our graduating students to be seeking employment within sectors which will have an increasingly globalised and international dimension. For those students to be successful not just in gaining initial employment but in developing a long term career, they need to be equipped with an awareness of this dimension and how to make full use of that awareness.

It therefore follows that internationalisation within the curriculum will not necessarily only be marked by exchanges, study leave abroad and visits. Indeed, it is perfectly feasible that an international awareness will be strongly developed in a curriculum which contains none of these.

What we should be looking for is a curriculum which develops awareness at least three levels:

- Professional/academic: the global dimension of the discipline and/or profession to which the programme is most closely related and how that interacts with and/or determines the subject specific content

- Skills development: what transferable/soft skills does the student need to develop in order to survive and flourish within the profession/occupation he/she is most likely to find herself (culturally sensitive social skills, management qualities, etc.)

- Global economy: how does the existence of a globalised economy impact on/shape the nature of the profession/occupation the student is likely to enter

We should be looking for ways in which these might deliver curriculum enhancement, a richer contextualisation of the curriculum and a developed student experience.

Specifying the criteria for Internationalising the Curriculum at Bolton

In recognition of the University's stated strategic aim of internationalising its curriculum, there is a need to specify the criteria by which programmes and modules and learner experiences may be considered 'internationalised'.

Internationalisation entails *"Activities and processes that help to prepare students for living and working in an international environment"*

This would mean that participants on internationalised activities would become (by virtue of participating in those activities) literate and aware of the cultural, professional and practical realities of working in an international environment.

In identifying specific criteria for internationalisation, a broad distinction can be made between:

a. The internationalisation of academic content (i.e. issues of localisation of the curriculum where appropriate)

b. Experiential aspects of learning which are 'internationalised', including social and organisational aspects of internationalised learning activities.

Environmental Sustainability and Awareness

Again, the reason for including this as one of the Bolton values in the core curriculum is the awareness that the professional context in which our graduates will find themselves is one in which there will be increased emphasis on the need to reduce organisations' carbon footprints, to reduce waste, to improve energy efficiency, to be aware of the impact of growing consumerism and to make informed and intelligent decisions in the light of those needs. Sustainability is related to internationalisation through the demands made on patterns of consumption and use by the globalisation of cultures, markets and supply chains. Issues which might be picked up in the curriculum would include:

- Globalisation and the global context
- Consumer culture and the free market
- Carbon reduction
- Systems, control mechanisms and environments
- Energy, consumption, waste and technology
- The impact of businesses and business practices on the environment
- Instrumentalism and stewardship

Employability

The employment market is rapidly changing, with global competition, new technology and an increased pressure to perform. Twenty first century graduates need to demonstrate to employers that they can respond to the requirements of a diverse and dynamic workplace. In order for our graduates to remain competitive, they need to have acquired and be able to demonstrate key employability skills.

Employability therefore needs to be addressed through the whole student life cycle and not just an additional option that students can by-pass. An integrated approach, aligned to the curriculum, ensures that those who cannot commit time and energy to extra-curricular activities still receive the grounding and employability knowledge needed, to ensure that they can compete in the graduate market.

Therefore the curriculum should be designed to offer integrated employability opportunities for students to:

- Develop self awareness of their own employability skills, understanding what they have achieved, how they have achieved it, and how to take action to bridge any evident gaps.
- Take part in work experience opportunities and assess and illustrate how this will help them achieve their career aspirations.
- Improve their self confidence, particularly in relation to reflecting on and articulating their capabilities and attributes in a range of recruitment situations.

A good curriculum and assessment design will not only ensure that a student receives the in depth subject-knowledge required, but they will also develop employability skills that can be transferred to other contexts and situations. Enabling students to understand how their learning and teaching activities support their employability and progression is a key part of this strategy.

Social, Public and Ethical Responsibility

As part of the preparation for entry to any career or profession, we should be making students aware of the kind of ethical issues which they may be called upon to address, and also the professional and personal standards of behaviour which will be expected of them. As with many other areas of working life where there is the need to exercise professional judgement, recognising, analysing, managing and, sometimes, resolving ethical issues demands skills and expertise which can be taught, developed and made more sophisticated through practice and guidance. Often this can best be done through engagement with case studies, vignettes, or real life examples through role play, analysis and discussion. In many discipline areas, curricula embody this kind of learning as a matter of course and include it unselfconsciously. This may especially be the case in those areas where professional decisions are required on a continual basis and the context invariably has a moral dimension, in professions allied to medicine, for example. Other programme areas may address the development of moral, social and political judgement as a requirement of professional bodies or potential employers.

The academic review is an opportunity to identify those areas of your programme(s) where this kind of activity takes place. These may be in specific modules, but it is more likely that activities will be taking place across the programme(s) where it is clear that there are opportunities to make students sensitive to and able to recognise ethical issues and dilemmas, to help them to analyse their implications and potential consequences and to act or propose actions appropriately. Should you wish for further guidance on this, you may want to consult some or all of the following:

http://www.idea.leeds.ac.uk/academic/resources-for-teaching-ethics/
http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/publications/ethics_across_curriculum.pdf
http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/pgmde/resources/howtoethics.pdf
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/resources/philosophy_ethics_sport.pdf
ftp://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/events/leics/downie.pdf
http://www.raeng.org.uk/societygov/engineeringethics/pdf/Teaching_Engineering_Ethics.pdf

APPENDIX TWO

QUICK GLANCE GUIDE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLTON UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

ALL MODULES WILL BE:

- 20 credits (40 credit modules will be acceptable e.g. projects/dissertations)
- Stand alone with pre requisite modules in exceptional circumstances
- Delivered and assessed within one semester
- Scheduled to maximise the direct contact time for each module

ALL MODULES WILL HAVE:

- A maximum of 5 Intended Learning Outcomes
  (Each Learning outcome will only be assessed once within a module)
- A maximum of two summative assessments (equivalent to 5,000 words in total)
- Formative assessment as central to the learning experience

ALL PROGRAMMES WILL HAVE:

- 120 credits per Academic year (fulltime); with a norm of 80 credits per year – standard part time programme with a stipulated route of modules
- The validation of Option modules will be limited (normally only at Level HE 6) and only delivered subject to student numbers (cohort size)
- No significant overlap of Learning Outcomes across the modules on the programme
- A variety of Assessment methods across the programme including formative assessment
- The three identifiable main strands of the Core Curriculum running through the programme i.e.
  1 Subject Knowledge and Information/Study Skills
  2 Employability and Professional Development
  3 The Bolton Values:
    - Internationalisation
    - Environmental Sustainability and Awareness
    - Social, Public and Ethical Responsibility
- Personal Tutoring strand to be incorporated into credit–bearing module(s) i.e. one module per semester
- Flexible modes of delivery for part time and off- campus students
- Online learning and support to enrich the learning experience of students

APPENDIX THREE

STAFF WORKSHOPS TO SUPPORT THE ACADEMIC REVIEW

The following sessions are offered to all staff to support the revalidation process.

Date	Time	Room	Presenter	Title
Monday 3 October 2011	12:00-2:00pm	D2-006	Sarah Riches	The Revalidation Process
Monday 10 October 2011	12:00-2:00pm	D2-020, Deane	Sarah Riches	The Revalidation Process
Tuesday 11 October 2011	12:00-2:00pm	D2-020, Deane	Prof Rob Campbell/ Sue Burkinshaw	The New Undergraduate Bolton Curriculum Framework
Monday 17 October 2011	12:00-2:00pm	D2-020, Deane	Sarah Riches	The Revalidation Process
Friday 21 October 2011	12:00-2:00pm	D1-006, Deane	Rob Campbell/ Sue Burkinshaw	The New Undergraduate Bolton Curriculum Framework
Tuesday 25 October 2011	12:00-2:00pm	D2-020, Deane	Sarah Riches	The Revalidation Process
Wednesday 26 October 2011	12:00-2:00pm	T3-056, Eagle	Sarah Riches	The Revalidation Process
Friday 4 November 2011	12:00-2:00pm	D2-004, Deane	Rob Campbell/ Sue Burkinshaw	The New Undergraduate Bolton Curriculum Framework
Wednesday 9 November 2011	12:00-2:00pm	T3-056, Eagle	Bill Olivier/ Stephen Powell/ Tracy Ellis	Rethinking your Curriculum
Friday 11 November 2011	12:00-2:00pm	D1-042, Deane	Sue Burkinshaw/ Jane Lovatt/ Stephen Powell	Module Specifications and Programme Design
Wednesday 23 November 2011	12:00-2:00pm	T2-084, Eagle	Julie Bateman/ Mike Lomas	Innovating around Employability
Friday 25 November 2011	12:00-2:00pm	D1-006, Deane	Ann Kolodziejski	Innovating around Sustainability
Wednesday 30 November 2011	12:00-2:00pm	T2-084, Eagle	Rob Campbell	Innovating around Professionals in Practice
Friday 2 December 2011	12:00-2:00pm	D2-004, Deane	Sue Burkinshaw/ Jane Lovatt/ Stephen Powell	Module Specifications and Programme Design
Wednesday 7 December 2011	12:00-2:00pm	T2-084, Eagle	Kasey Carver/ Sue Burkinshaw	Innovating around Internationalisation
Friday 9 December 2011	12:00-2:00pm	D1-006, Deane	Sue Burkinshaw/ Jane Lovatt/ Stephen Powell	Module Specifications and Programme Design

All documents and guidance related to the process can be found at:
http://elearning.bolton.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=6123