

TPG - Curriculum Design

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- Why curriculum design?
 - Programmes as operationalisation of an institution's teaching mission
 - Curricula fulfil various goals and are a powerful tool
- How to approach curriculum design
 - Various points of action at different stages in the process of designing a curriculum:
 - Defining graduate attributes and competences to be acquired
 - Ensuring the coherence of the curriculum (content; teaching & assessment approaches)
 - Enabling the involvement of students and fostering communication among teachers
 - Enabling the involvement of external stakeholders
 - Encouraging continuous reflection and facilitating change

Enter up to 3 components of an ideal curriculum



I. Defining graduate attributes

- What?
 - Graduate attributes (GA) anchor a curriculum and its alumni to the values and characteristics of a particular institution.
- GAs can be defined at both institutional and programme level.
 - They need to be made visible, so that students can identify with them and articulate them when entering the world of work.
 - At programme level the curriculum that students follow needs to have a traceable link back to the identified graduate attributes
- A challenge and a solution:
 - There is a risk that graduate attributes are very similar from one institution to the next. Making them distinctive and clearly articulated also helps students stand out when entering the world of work, boosting the reputation of the institution and creating stronger ties between the institution and its alumni

II. Balancing subject-specific and transversal competences

- What?
 - Curricula can only cover a finite amount of material. The challenge is what to leave out, rather than what to put in. .
- How?
 - Competences need to resonate with the institutional profile, the graduate attributes, and the specific programme.
 - Take the generic skills seriously in practice, not just list them on paper.
 - Embed them throughout the curriculum, not just in stand-alone courses.
- Challenge and a solution:
 - The competences should be clearly articulated in the curriculum to make sure the graduates are aware of the skills they have acquired

III. Ensuring curriculum coherence

What is coherence in a curriculum?

- Emphasis on shared learning outcomes
- Static vs Adaptive (interactive curriculum)
- Assessment and feedback
- Interdisciplinary approaches



IV. Taking the “hidden curriculum” into account

What is a hidden curriculum

- Identifying the student body
- Considering accessibility (co/extra-curricular)
- Inclusive considerations
- How “diversity and inclusion” is perceived



V. Aiming for didactic variety and effectiveness

Inclusive curriculum

- Context of Queen Mary
- Identifying the needs
- Student Interns (Going for Gold project)
- Pilot project



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VII. Enabling the involvement of students

- What?
 - Foster a culture of participation and co-ownership
- How?
 - Involving student-representatives in the decision-making bodies
 - Making students co-creators instead of recipients
- Inspiring ideas and practices:
 - Instigating a dialogue regarding curriculum review → regular focus groups or discussion rounds at the end of the academic year
 - Learning contracts between students and staff at the beginning of each course

VIII. Fostering collaboration and communication between teaching staff

- What?
 - Moving away from the “traditional” way of viewing teaching as an individual responsibility
- How?
 - Setting up institutional support for collaboration and peer learning
 - Providing space for regular exchange between different groups of teachers
- Inspiring ideas and practices:
 - Teaching retreats, away days or seminars
 - Fostering the idea of course development teams

VI. Involving perspectives from outside

- What?
 - Involve stakeholders at different stages of developing and implementing a curriculum
- How?
 - Implement external advisory boards
 - Involve future employers
 - As well as peers
- Inspiring ideas and practices:
 - Involve stakeholders as co-creators
 - Employ (community) service learning



IX. Encouraging permanent reflection and creating opportunities for change

- What?
 - ensure sufficient space for review and reflection as well as capacity to act on that information
- How?
 - Review programs continuously in terms of
 - relevance and appropriateness of learning outcomes
 - alignment of learning outcomes, teaching methods and assessment
 - student workload, progression and completion
- Inspiring ideas and practices:
 - Supporting evidence based/informed approaches to teaching
 - Offering *time* (reduction of teaching hours) to do so

