

## A Best Practice Guide to Curriculum Design 2021-22

This document supports the use of innovative programme design of taught programmes at all levels. The guide is divided into 3 main sections:

1. Rationale
2. The University of Bolton Curriculum Philosophy
3. Practical Guidance for Curriculum Design

### Section 1: Rationale

The aim of the guide is to ensure that University of Bolton programmes are designed using a **unique and highly effective curriculum architecture** in order to:

- Provide a distinctive, stimulating and attractive learning offer
- Allow for the development of a personalised, relevant and challenging student learning experience
- Enhance student satisfaction
- Improve student achievement and retention
- Improve student employability
- Enhance stakeholder involvement
- Promote the University of Bolton Graduate Attributes Framework (GAME/GAME+)

**Teaching Intensive, Research Informed:** Accordingly, emphasis is placed on the support and empowerment of tutors to develop innovative and effective learning, teaching and assessment strategies, which are underpinned by cutting edge research and scholarly activity.



## Section 2: The University of Bolton Curriculum Philosophy

# The Curriculum Philosophy

Taught Programmes at the University of Bolton:



Teaching Intensive. Research Informed

  

<p><b>1</b> Are underpinned by learning and teaching practices informed by reflection, scholarship and cutting-edge research (TIRI)</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/>	<p><b>5</b> Employ effective assessment and feedback practices which support knowledge and skills development</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/>
<p><b>2</b> Offer a stimulating, relevant, personalised and inclusive experience</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/>	<p><b>6</b> Are developed, delivered and evaluated in partnership with students and other stake-holders</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/>
<p><b>3</b> Develop students as autonomous, self-directed, critical and reflective learners</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/>	<p><b>7</b> Use resources and technology effectively to support learning, teaching and assessment</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/>
<p><b>4</b> Develop knowledge and skills to enable graduates to achieve personal, academic and professional goals</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/>	<p><b>8</b> Provide graduates with the opportunity to develop a unique and effective set of attributes</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/>

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## Section 3: Practical Guidelines

Curriculum design takes place at programme approval stage. Please refer also the Guidelines for Preparing Programme Specifications and Guidelines for Preparing Module Specifications.

**Component 1: Programmes at the University of Bolton are underpinned by learning and teaching practices informed by reflection, scholarship and cutting-edge research (TIRI)**

- Research and scholarly activity should be used to inform curriculum design - to ensure programme content is relevant, current and interesting.
  
- Allow for flexibility at programme and module level by outlining broad strategies for learning and teaching. Examples of learning and teaching methods should be presented, and not a finite list. In this way, academics can adopt delivery methods which are relevant, stimulating and underpinned by educational scholarship and research.

**Component 2: Programmes at the University of Bolton offer a stimulating, relevant, personalised and inclusive experience**

- When writing programme and module learning outcomes, consider the wording carefully, recognising the diverse nature of the student body, the dynamic external environment and international perspectives.

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- Allow for flexibility at programme and module level by outlining broad strategies for learning, teaching and assessment (formative and summative).
- Where possible/appropriate, describe the methods of assessment on a module specification in broad terms e.g. written piece, oral piece, practical skills assessment, portfolio of evidence. This will allow students and/or employers to have an input into the type of assessment set.
- Embed formal opportunities for setting and reflecting on goals, as well as professional development planning at each stage of the programme

**Examples of academic written assessments** include: *reports, essays, seminar papers and academic journal articles*

**Examples of more practical written assessments** include: *blogs, trade journal articles, newspaper articles, press releases and reflective diaries*

**Examples of oral assessments** include: *PowerPoint/Prezi presentations, seminar presentations, poster presentations, role plays, interviews, professional discussions and vivas*

**Examples of practical skills assessments** include: *projects, portfolio outputs, OSCEs, performances, + designing artefacts, programmes, tools, resources etc.*

### **Component 3: Programmes at the University of Bolton develop students as autonomous, self-directed, critical and reflective learners**

At each level make explicit where and how students will develop and reflect on key on academic, professional/practical and life skills within a relevant context. Skills should be embedded in the curriculum and there should be clear progression from dependent to independent learning – culminating in an independent research project.

At each level use appropriate verbs for learning outcomes – demonstrating expectations. e.g:

**Level 3 and HE4:** *explain, describe, discuss.* **HE5:** *Analyse, appraise, compare and contrast.*

**HE6 and HE7:** *Critically appraise, critically evaluate, synthesise.* **HE7** also include: *Solve complex problems, develop creative or innovative solutions/ recommendations*

**Examples of academic skills:** *information literacy, academic writing, referencing, presentation and research skills*

**Examples of life skills:** *rhetoric, logic, analysis, creativity, planning, time-management, flexibility, communication, negotiation, conflict management, team working, leadership, enterprise, grit and resilience.*

### **Component 4: Programmes at the University of Bolton develop knowledge and skills to ensure graduates achieve their personal, academic and professional goals**

- Consider both specialist and interdisciplinary knowledge – informed by Benchmark Statements, Apprenticeship Standards, PSRBs (if relevant), as well the present and future needs of industry.

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- Leading research and scholarly activity should be used to inform curriculum design - to ensure programme content is relevant, current and interesting.
- Embed formal opportunities for setting and reflecting on personal, academic and professional goals at each stage of the programme.
- Consider how enterprise and work-related learning can be integrated effectively into the teaching learning and assessment of a programme. Work-related learning may include placements, live project briefs, guest speakers, industry visits etc. Note: Keep details of projects, speakers and visits general to allow for flexibility and to ensure CMA guidelines are not breached.
- If a programme includes a period of work experience then a Placement Handbook will need to be provided which includes the roles and responsibilities of the student, academic supervisor and placement provider. See the Code of Practice for Work Based and Placement Learning.
- You may want to consider including an enterprise (or entrepreneurship/intrapreneurship) module in your programme in order to develop creativity, innovation, managed risk-taking and commercial skills.

**Component 5: Programmes at the University of Bolton employ effective assessment/ feedback practices which support knowledge and skills development**

- See annual assessment guidance

**Component 6: Programmes at the University of Bolton are developed, delivered and evaluated in partnership with students and other stakeholders**

- Current/perspective student opinions must be sought when designing a programme. Group presentations to students are a useful way of outlining discuss key programme features, as well as gaining feedback.
- Potential employer feedback can be sought via email and /or via School Industry Advisory Boards. The draft programme specification together with a brief outline of each module give employers a useful overview.
- Apprenticeship and PSRB standards will also influence curriculum content.

**Component 7: Programmes at the University of Bolton use resources and technology effectively to support learning, teaching and assessment**

- A list of programme learning resources and specialist resources is required at validation.
- It is expected that learning, teaching and assessment is supported by the use of VLE.

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- Try not to be too specific about technological resources in the programme and module specifications – in order to future-proof them. Promotional materials can contain details of specific resources, as these can be updated when required.

**Component 8: Programmes at the University of Bolton provide graduates with the opportunity to develop a unique and effective set of attributes**

- Consider how graduate attributes can be developed at each level e.g. through explicit skills development, diverse assessments, independent and group learning opportunities, work-related learning, opportunities for reflection on outcomes and progress, personal development planning, knowledge sharing and peer feedback and support.

**GAME for Undergraduate Programmes**

The following 10 core graduate attributes should be embedded in each undergraduate programme of study and serve as the fundamental skills framework for University of Bolton students:



**GAME+ for Postgraduate Programmes**

Building on the University of Bolton’s undergraduate GAME model, postgraduate students should be supported to develop higher-level skills and attributes. In order to provide a framework for enhanced career velocity, all postgraduate students should work towards GAME+. The five strands of GAME+ are:

- Influence and impact
- Critical self-management
- Critical Creativity and innovation
- Professional identity
- Skills mastery.