

QA3 Annex C – Curriculum Design Principles

These nine key principles should guide the design of curricula for all courses:

1. Inspire learners

Enthuse students for the subjects they choose to study and the broader aspects of university life. Demonstrate clearly the ways in which the University of Bath designs and facilitates their learning experience and their post-graduation experiences, such as through reflecting professional practice in what we teach.

2. Build on existing success

Promote the known benefits of the University community and its wider networks, including the impact of Bath research and the application of knowledge to real-world settings; employability through distinctive placement and other applied experiences; learning and developing in a World Heritage City and the South West region; and a well-articulated educational ethos.

3. Articulate a course-wide approach to learning

Design delivery and assessment from a coherent set of course-wide learning outcomes. Use viable, engaging and inspiring methods across the course's delivery and assessment to enable students to achieve those outcomes. Pay particular attention to the impact of design on transition into the first year of our undergraduate courses, and into postgraduate study.

4. Embrace assessment for learning

Recognise that assessment motivates and develops individual knowledge and skills as well as validating student achievement. Plan assessment strategically so that it supports the achievement of overall course goals and makes the most of the resources we have across the institution.

5. Support the diverse needs of learners

Design inclusive curricula so that all students can develop a sense of belonging, purpose and identity. Recognise the differing needs of students at all levels, particularly those who represent communities that may have been marginalised or historically underrepresented in the discipline. Promote student integration into the learning community through supportive approaches to content and assessment.

6. Engage with research

Create opportunities for students to engage actively with, and contribute to, research communities in the University. Build cultures of research and inquiry within the curriculum from the outset, so that students become genuine partners in the production of knowledge rather than being passive consumers.

7. Embed global citizenship and sustainability

Recognise the challenges presented by the changes to our broader physical and social environment. Consider how our curriculum might empower students for the roles they will play during their lives as global citizens. Develop mechanisms in the curricular and/or co-curricular realms to prepare them for these challenges.

8. Build on meaningful partnerships

Develop strategies that maximise the potential contributions of internal and external stakeholders, including those from industry and the professions. Work towards establishing students as full partners in the curriculum, co-creating approaches to delivery and assessment. Enable students to support their peers in innovative and mutually beneficial ways. Listen actively to partner organisations and find ways to engage them in education, including the development of practice-focused pathways.

9. Embrace the opportunities for transformation

Make genuine and meaningful improvements to the way we work and facilitate learning. Take full advantage of the opportunities we have to be progressive and forward-looking for the benefit of both staff and students.

The University seeks opportunities to make genuine and meaningful improvements to the way we work and facilitate learning. Taking advantage of the opportunities we have to be progressive and forward-looking for the benefit of both staff and students requires us to:

10. Design towards staff and student wellbeing and work/life balance

Be aware of the intensity of assessment and its effects on our community. Adopt assessment-for-learning approaches that can enable us to be strategic about how, when, and why we assess students. Ensure that we use sufficient summative assessment to have confidence in the achievement of learning outcomes at various levels, and no more.

11. Create strong foundations for continuous improvement

Use curriculum transformation as the foundation for a course that is fit for the twenty-first century. Design with flexibility and adaptability to ensure that continuous improvement will be responsive to stakeholders and considered in the lifetime of the course.

12. Use University resources efficiently and effectively

Understand both the opportunities and constraints relating to learning and teaching, such as with space, and within the timetable. Think about how the course's use of space and modes of delivery can be effective for new generations of students.

13. Ensure there is space for broader learning activities

Build in the capacity for different learning activities and interactions. Find ways to utilise contributions from the Skills Centre, the Library, and other services as integrated parts of the course. Make the most of student and academic interaction.

14. Work creatively within flexible frameworks

Understand and work within the flexibilities that will be part of the new design and regulatory frameworks. Simplify course regulations for greater effectiveness. Tell a coherent and simple story about progression through the course that will be clearly understood by students.

15. Design a fresh approach to choice

Enable students to experience specialist areas while maintaining the overall coherence of a well-structured course and curriculum. Counter any over-assessment that may develop. Be creative about where choice may be most beneficial within the course assessment and/or study. Ensure choice early in the course does not limit later opportunities for student learning.