

University of Greenwich: Curriculum Framework

The following pages outline a curriculum framework for University of Greenwich programmes, based on the refreshed strategy for the university. The purpose of the framework is to ensure that all of our programmes deliver the kind of education that the University of Greenwich believes is important and which is in line with our values as an organisation. It is designed to help programme and module leaders to reflect upon their curriculum design and to consider whether it can be further enhanced to better forward the purposes of a higher education from the university.

This framework should be used when considering the design of new programmes and for reviewing and revising existing programmes. It is recognised that not all dimensions will apply equally to all programmes across the institution. Nevertheless, programme and module leaders should reflect on the extent to which provision can be enhanced across the full range of the framework.

Dimensions of the framework

University of Greenwich curricula are:

- Inclusive
- Personalised
- Employment-focused and Industry-led
- International
- Student-informed
- Research and pedagogy-informed
- Supportive of wellbeing
- For sustainable development

Dimension: Inclusive

Introduction

Our curricula acknowledge the existence of structural inequality inside and outside the University and acknowledge the negative impact of eurocentrism and white privilege on the University's diverse students and staff. To challenge this, the curricula we will strive to speak to the experiences of all students and students see people and perspectives they can relate to represented within them. Students should be able to share their prior knowledge and experiences with peers and staff in order to ensure the curricula reflect these diverse perspectives.

They include belonging interventions to ensure all students feel welcome and are recognised as valued members of the community; and are sensitive to different perspective of the social world, the different types and levels of capital: cultural capital, religious/ spirituals, social /ethnic capitals, familial capitals, embodied knowledge and privileges that students arrive with. Teaching and learning methods and assessments are diverse and flexible to enable all students to best demonstrate their knowledge and abilities and skills.

The University recognises that changes at curricular level are only one part of a wider process of decolonising the University including embedding equality into all the university's practices.

Reflective Questions:

Looking Back to Look forward:

1. How does the programme / module reproduce structural inequality such as eurocentrism, white privilege, heteronormativity, androcentrism and ableism other forms of hegemony e.g. African heritage, BAME and LGBTQIA?
2. How does the programme/ module challenge bias, under-representation, misrepresentation and marginalisation of minorities?

Considering New designs Ahead:

1. How does the programme develop awareness of unconscious bias and how does this impact on our students and colleagues?
2. To what extent does the programme incorporate examples, content and visual representations from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalisations and theories?
3. How does the programme help students to critically engage with historical and contemporary issues around race, class and gender in context of the subject?
4. To what extent are authentic activities designed to develop students' academic and employability skills integrated into modules?
5. To what extent does the programme support the development of awareness, skills and confidence to challenge bias, and marginalisation and discrimination?
6. How connected is the programme to relevant community activism and professional bodies?
7. How effective are the belonging interventions that you will use in the programme for a range of students and how will the effectiveness of these be measured?
8. How does the programme enable inclusion and facilitate access to all new and existing students?
9. To what extent does the programme recognize the importance of how an Intersectional approach can surface excluded groups and focus attention on inclusion?
10. Does programme documentation (e.g. learning outcomes, assessment criteria / rubrics) use language in a way that ensures instructions and expectations are unambiguous and accessible to all students?
11. Are the teaching and learning approaches used on this programme varied and flexible enough to accommodate differences in students' prior knowledge and educational experiences?
12. Are students able to choose from a range of assessment methods and submit different kinds of assessment evidence in order to meet learning outcomes?
13. Do you have access to and use attainment data by demographics together with SAP reports to identify suitable module improvements that improve inclusivity?
14. What impediments and facilitators are there to reflecting on these data and embedding these reflections into professional practice (data need to be made available in a timely manner, accessible and meaningful; staff need training and guidance and tools in order to interpret and act on these data; relates to wider challenges in using our reporting systems)
15. Have the identified/used interventions aiming to ensure developing inclusivity and the appropriate skillset already demonstrated their effectiveness

(through e.g. previous research) and/or how do you plan to objectively evaluate the effectiveness across a sufficiently diverse student population?

Dimension: Personalised

Introduction

Our curricula are personalised to allow all students to learn according to their interest and need, and to obtain the best results that they can. We use digital tools to support assessment of learning needs and to direct students to learning resources and support according to these. We aim for students to become increasingly self-regulatory and to develop intrinsic satisfaction and motivation as a result of a personalised approach to their learning. Our curricula provide personalised support as well as choice in activities and learning resources for students, throughout their learning journey. A range of teaching and assessment methods are used across the programme to ensure that all students can engage and demonstrate their learning. All curricula provide the opportunity for students to engage with tutors in small group settings and encourage students to develop their own arguments and opinions, including in areas of personal interest.

Reflective Questions:

1. What personalised support is available to students?
2. What range / choice of resources is available to students?
3. To what extent is a range of teaching and assessment methods used across the programme?
4. How much opportunity is there for students to engage with tutors and peers in small group settings in order to scaffold development?
5. How much opportunity is there for students to design their own curriculum (E.g. individualised pathways within modules) and to study subjects which interest them within their modules?
6. In what ways can students personalise/ have choice in the assessments?

Dimension: Employment-focused and Industry-led

Introduction

Our curricula provide opportunities for students to develop the skills, competencies, knowledge and attributes most valued by employers. They provide opportunities for students to learn within a work setting and relate this to their on-campus learning. Our curricula support students to develop their curriculum vitae and interview technique. Assessment and learning tasks are authentic.

Reflective Questions:

1. To what extent does the programme develop: soft skills, competencies and attributes valuable for employment?
2. Do students have the opportunity to undertake a placement, internship or work-based learning and to relate this to their on-campus learning?
3. How can you measure the quality and impact of these opportunities? How can you ensure fairness and opportunity of access?
4. How well does the programme support students to develop their curriculum vitae and interview techniques?
5. To what extent are assessment and learning tasks authentic? What does “authenticity” mean in your curriculum context? How can “authenticity” be determined and measured?

6. How and to what extent can industry professionals and alumni co-design and co-deliver the curriculum?

Dimension: International

Introduction

Our curricula support the application of learning to international challenges and reflect international content and the work of international authors. They acknowledge how knowledge may be differently constructed across cultures, how professional practices differ internationally, and support the development of inter-cultural competence. Our programmes provide the opportunity for international placements/exchanges and for students to integrate this learning with the rest of their curriculum. In pursuing these objectives, our curricula should consider the experience and the opportunity to engage with our communities, including exchange students and partner institutions.

Reflective Questions:

1. To what extent does the curriculum reflect international content/challenges?
2. How does the curriculum develop awareness that knowledge may be constructed differently in different cultures and that professional practices can differ?
3. How much opportunity is there for students to study abroad and have international experiences for part of their programme?

Dimension: Student-Informed

Introduction

We recognise that students have valuable knowledge about the experience of being taught and learning, as well as what is important to them. When this is brought together with the knowledge staff have of the discipline, pedagogy and the expectations of graduates, we believe it enhances the curriculum. Such engagement with curriculum design supports the development of a range of skills such as creativity and decision-making, it also enhances students' engagement with their programme and the development of a learning community.

New modules and programmes are therefore developed in collaboration with students and alumni, with elements of them being co-created as appropriate. Once approved, curricula are negotiated with students undertaking a module; so that content, learning methods and assessment tasks may be adjusted to better meet student needs while still meeting and measuring attainment of module learning outcomes. Furthermore, student feedback is collected informally in class and formally through the module evaluation process and elected student representatives. Building on this feedback, module leaders work with students where possible to make changes for future years.

Reflective Questions:

1. How is the curriculum negotiated with students undertaking a module?
2. How could module leaders be further supported to work with students to make changes for future iterations of the module?

3. Are there ways to increase the opportunity and range of curriculum decisions that students and alumni input into during the development of curricula?
4. Which elements of the curriculum would it be possible to co-create with students?

Dimension: Research and pedagogy-informed

Introduction

Our curricula are informed by high-quality research and scholarship. Students understand the role that research plays in the creation of knowledge and in solving complex issues. Students learn to critically understand and evaluate research in their discipline and to appreciate the importance of interdisciplinary research and collaboration as well as how high-impact research benefits our global society. They are taught about the process of conducting research and about research philosophies, approaches and methodologies, and develop the ability to conduct research in their discipline, as appropriate to their level. Students are invited to contribute to the curriculum. Our curricula encourage creativity and innovation and students are provided with the opportunity to work together to discuss findings, develop and critique arguments and apply creative ways to solve problems. Our curricula are informed by sound pedagogy and delivered through a variety of innovative and technology-enhanced teaching methods. There is clear alignment between module and programme outcomes, content and assessment. Detailed and rigorous feedback is provided promptly and in such a way as to help students to improve their work, regardless of their grade.

Reflective Questions:

1. To what extent is the curriculum informed by the latest, high-quality research and existing debates in the discipline?
2. To what extent are interdisciplinary perspectives used to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline, as well as current social, cultural and economic challenges?
3. To what extent are students supported in developing an ability to critically reflect and recognise where theories and methods are contested, and where knowledge is uncertain (i.e. enquiry-based learning)?
4. To what extent are students provided with the opportunity to be creative and innovative, work together to discuss findings, develop and critique arguments and apply creative ways to solve problems?
5. To what extent are students aware of the role that research plays in the creation of knowledge that improves society, public awareness, innovation and impact?
6. To what extent does the research informing the curriculum address disparities in knowledge creation, and students have opportunities to recognise the extent to which existing research reflects imbalances, especially around gender, race and power?
7. To what extent do students learn and critically understand the outcomes and process of conducting research and scholarship in this discipline?
8. To what extent do students learn and critically understand level-appropriate research approaches and methodologies relevant to their discipline?
9. To what extent do students learn and critically understand the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration to address current social, cultural and economic challenges?

10. To what extent do students demonstrate an ability to conduct research relevant to their degree and level?
11. To what extent is the curriculum informed by sound pedagogy and andragogy and delivered through a variety of up-to-date, innovative and technology-enhanced teaching methods?
12. How well do the module and programme outcomes align with each other and the programme content and assessment?
13. How well do the content, assessment, research informed feedback and teaching methods ensure internal coherence, build on and supplement previous modules/stages throughout the programme?
14. To what extent is the curriculum inclusive – speaking to a diverse range of people, perspectives and experiences?
15. To what extent do acquired research-informed skills enhance employability skills and prospects?
16. Does each module have dedicated space and time for general written and verbal feedback?
17. Do you have examples of student contributions to the curriculum of your module?

Dimension: Supportive of wellbeing

Introduction

Our curricula are designed to support student wellbeing. They encourage students to connect with peers, tutors, and industry-professionals and to engage actively with their learning and other related issues. Our curricula aim to remove unnecessary stressors, normalise challenges as part of learning, and promote a health and wellbeing environment.

The curriculum integrates opportunities for students to identify, reflect on and manage factors shaping their wellbeing and to actively manage this as part of their personal and professional development as a student and graduate.

Reflective Questions:

1. What does wellbeing mean in relation to your curriculum context?
2. Where in the curriculum do you explicitly address wellbeing issues?
3. How does the curriculum design encourage students to actively engage with their learning?
4. How do you support students to connect (with peers, staff and industry-professionals) and develop a sense of belonging?
5. How can you mitigate any stressors that may emerge from the challenges in our learning designs, for example, those associated with groupwork assignments, examinations, practice learning, study abroad?
6. How is student wellbeing considered in the design and planning of assessments, assessment load and the provision of feedback?
7. How does the curriculum integrate opportunities to develop self-awareness and equip students with skills to enhance self-efficacy?
8. How does the curriculum make use of technology to support wellbeing?

Dimension: For Sustainable Development

Introduction

Our academic community, both students and staff have a crucial role in helping solve many of the challenges our societies and natural systems face. By looking at what we teach through the 'lens' of sustainability we can create teaching and learning experiences that connect to the world around us and the issues that need to be considered, understood and solved. Our curricula integrate sustainability themes and pathways, appropriate to the various disciplines and professions. They provide strong connections between what is important to our academic community and their values, build skills and awareness and provide learning experiences of value to continuous professional development, and, in the case of students, employability. Sustainability has relevance to every area of our teaching. Whilst our curricula are underpinned by the general ethos of Education for Sustainable Development/Futures (ESD/ESF), QAA benchmarks therein and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we recognise there is not a 'one size fits all' approach to integrating sustainability into our learning and teaching. We therefore encourage our staff to explore and take responsibility for how sustainability can add a range of valued learning outcomes for our student community.

Reflective Questions:

1. What Sustainable Development Goals do students explicitly engage with in your curriculum?
 - a) How does climate change connect with your discipline-based curriculum?
 - b) How does the module/subject level SD content connect to other strategic sustainability considerations (for example using the SDGs to identify wider relationships)?
2. How does the curriculum develop critical thinking, systems thinking and anticipatory competency as skills for co-designing solutions and driving change?
3. How does the curriculum develop competencies and motivation to pursue visions of the future?
4. How is Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) creating a transformative experience for students?
5. How is the curriculum avoiding merely adding ESD content, and instead focusing on aligning other learning outcomes and content to assist ESD?
6. How is ESD assessed?

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Approved by:

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