

DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING TAUGHT AWARD OR CREDIT-BEARING PROVISION

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Outline of the procedure

1. This section of the Quality Framework has been designed to meet the expectations and core and common practices set out within the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education and has been informed by a number of the advice and guidance sections, in particular the guiding principles set out with the Course Design and Development section.
2. The design and development of all taught award or credit-bearing provision is a subject-level activity overseen by the School Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee (LTAC). The process will include internal and external academic peers and will be complete once the proposal has been subjected to a process of internal scrutiny.
3. The time taken to design and develop a taught credit-bearing module or a taught award or credit-bearing programme and to prepare a proposal for consideration is controlled by the proposing subject group and dependent on module and programme leaders keeping the School Academic Lead for Quality and School Support Officers fully informed of the progress in developing a proposal. When planning the development and lead-in time for taught credit-bearing provision, it is important to consider the timescales for promoting the provision (including UCAS and prospectus website deadlines) and to consider planning and administrative timeframes, for example deadlines relating to timetable planning for on-campus provision. Further guidance to support this planning process is provided in Appendix 1.

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External benchmarking

4. The University recognises and takes full account of the qualification descriptors set out in [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#). As such all approved taught award or credit-bearing provision is aligned to academic qualifications within the [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework](#) and the [European Qualifications Framework](#).

Points to be considered when designing and developing a taught credit-bearing module

5. As modules are typically not standalone, but contribute to a student's learning experience on their programmes, it is important that the development and design of the module is considered in the context of the programme(s) that it contributes to. Discussion and consultation with the programme leader(s) is expected as part of the development process, and that the module development adheres to the [programme design guidelines](#).



6. The following is an indicative list of topics to be considered when developing a proposed credit-bearing module; it is neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive:
- a) the purpose of the module within the context of the school strategic or operational plans, including whether it could be offered individually for continuous professional development (CPD) purposes, as a short course in its own right.
 - b) a module title which accurately reflects the content and purpose of the module.
 - c) the intended learning outcomes required to achieve the purpose of the module (typically two to six learning outcomes are expected for a 20 credit module) which are set at the appropriate level of academic challenge in accordance with the Scottish Qualifications and Credit Framework (SCQF).
 - d) the learning, teaching and assessment approaches required to enable students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes which align to the mode of delivery (ie. whether it is to be delivered primarily face-to-face; online; or as part of a blended approach),
 - e) the timing and method for providing formative learning experiences and feedback so that students understand the strengths and limitations of their past performance to enable them to learn and improve future performance. The volume, nature and timing of formative and summative assessment should be considered (taking into account information presented in the [University's Assessment and Feedback guidance](#)).
 - f) Consideration should be given as to how summative assessment tasks will be developed to ensure that all module learning outcomes can be summatively assessed, taking account of University assessment regulations (eg. use of one or two components of assessment).
 - g) the understanding and skills required to gain entry to the module, including necessary pre-requisites.
 - h) The extent to which the proposed learning, teaching and assessment approach within the module adheres to good practice in inclusive, [universal design for learning](#).
 - i) arrangements to support the student learning experience including academic support, personal development tutor support and pastoral support, and the extent to which this can be embedded into the module as part of an inclusive approach to student support.
 - j) availability of learning resources including provision of information technology, library or specialist equipment (consultation with key professional services at an early stage of development is encouraged).



- k) If the module incorporates a work-placement, or elements of work-related learning, it is recommended that consultation with the University Student Futures team is undertaken at an early stage of the development.
 - l) any potential risk that could affect adversely the University's reputation and standing as a result of delivering the proposal.
 - m) where appropriate, professional, statutory or regulatory body accreditation or recognition requirements.
 - n) feedback and comment received from the external academic peer on the appropriateness of the proposal with particular reference to subject area expectations regarding the content, academic challenge and learning, teaching and assessment practices.
7. The University's online module descriptor in revision (available from [Quality Framework Section 1 Forms](#)) provides a framework which helps to ensure that key module information is presented in a consistent format University-wide. It also provides the opportunity to describe the module as a learning journey from the student perspective. Support in using the online module descriptor is provided in a Moodle course and additional field-specific guidance document available in Section 1 Forms.
8. While not included within the module descriptor, it is important to note that a student-facing assessment brief is required for each assessment task defined within the module descriptor. This should take account of the minimum range of information to be included in each assessment brief as set out in the [Code of Practice for Assessment Setting](#)

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Points to be considered when designing and developing a taught award or credit-bearing programme

9. A taught award of credit-bearing programme of study consists of a clearly identifiable curriculum, a distinct student body and a programme team responsible for its management and delivery. The size and shape of a programme may vary according to purpose, for example, top-up programmes or programmes delivered for commercial CPD. However the University academic regulations define the University expectations around programmes leading to an award of the University. The following is an indicative list of topics to be considered when developing a proposed taught award or credit-bearing programme; it is neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive:
- a) any potential risk that could affect adversely the University's reputation and standing as a result of delivering the proposal



- b) the purpose of the programme within the context of the [University Strategy, 'Shaping our Future: Driving Distinctiveness'](#), the [Learning & Teaching Strategy](#) and the School strategic or operational plans, this should include consideration with regards to the developing [Gold Standard Curriculum Framework](#)
- c) the intended learning outcomes required to achieve the purpose of the programme
- d) the intended learning outcomes required to achieve any exit awards available to students who do not complete the programme
- e) the title of the final award and any exit awards which accurately reflect the programme content
- f) the mode of delivery (if the programme is to be delivered as part of the University's Global Online provision then additional guidance should be sought from the Global Online team see for example, <http://www2.napier.ac.uk/online/develop>)
- g) the learning, teaching and assessment approaches required to enable students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes
- h) the availability, and coherence, of existing approved modules to enable students to achieve the proposed programme learning outcomes, and requirement for the development of new modules to be considered as part of the programme approval process
- i) the assessment and feedback strategy in place across the programme so that students understand the strengths and limitations of their past performance and to enable them to improve future performance across modules
- j) an assessment matrix which sets out, by stage of study, the volume, nature and timing of formative and summative assessment and the timing of the provision of formative feedback to enable students to understand the strengths and limitations of their past performance with a view to improving future performance
- k) the understanding and skills required to gain entry to the programme
- l) the process for considering and approving recognised prior learning for admission to the programme and subsequently against specific learning outcomes
- m) the extent to which the proposed learning, teaching and assessment approach within the module adheres to good practice in inclusive, [universal design for learning](#).
- n) arrangements to support the student learning experience including academic, personal development tutor and pastoral support



- o) availability of learning resources including provision of information technology, library or specialist equipment
 - p) the mechanisms to enable students to provide the programme team with systematic feedback on their student learning experience
 - q) the relevant subject and/or qualification [benchmark statements](#)
 - r) the account given to the feedback and comment received from the external academic peer on the appropriateness of the proposal with particular reference to subject area expectations regarding the content, academic challenge and learning, teaching and assessment practices
 - s) where appropriate, professional, statutory or regulatory body accreditation or recognition requirements.
10. The University's programme specification template provides a framework which sets out the University's expected minimum programme information set for all approved taught programmes irrespective of the mode or place of delivery. See [Undergraduate programme specification template and Taught master's programme specification template](#).

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The University's programme design guidelines

11. The [University's comprehensive programme design guidelines](#) were approved in May 2014, and updated in 2017 and should be taken into account during the development of new programmes. During 2021/22 academic session the University will continue to develop its Gold Standard Curriculum Framework to inform programme design. In addition, if the programme under development incorporates modules from more than one subject area, reference should also be made to the following guidance:

Subject components

12. Subject components assist the University in achieving consistency in the ways in which qualification titles convey information about the level, nature and subjects of study in accordance with expectations set out in [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#).
13. A subject component is a grouping of modules from the same subject area which, when combined with other subject components, form an approved programme of study.
14. Subject components may be approved as part of a programme of study leading to a joint or combined award of the University:
- a) a joint award title indicates that there is an approximately equal balance between two subject components



- b) a combined award title indicates that there is a major and a minor subject component where the minor subject component accounts for at least a quarter of the programme.

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Joint honours undergraduate programmes

15. The award title for a joint bachelor's degree with honours and all exit award titles will take the form *Subject A and Subject B*.
16. To gain a joint bachelor's degree with honours a student must successfully achieve:
 - a) 480 credits, with neither component falling below 200 credits or exceeding 240 credits, from the pool of compulsory or option modules, and including a minimum of 40 credits at SCQF level 10 as a dissertation or final project.
 - b) Table 1 sets out the minimum and maximum credit requirements in each subject component from the pool of compulsory or option modules to gain a joint bachelor's degree with honours and all associated exit awards.

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Table 1: Minimum and maximum credit requirements in each subject component to gain a joint undergraduate award

AWARD TITLE	CREDIT TO GAIN AWARD	MINIMUM CREDIT	MAXIMUM CREDIT
Joint bachelor's degree with honours	480	200	240
Joint bachelor's degree	360	160	200
Joint diploma of higher education	240	120	120
Joint certificate of higher education	120	60	60

Combined undergraduate programmes

17. The award title for a combined bachelor's degree with honours and all exit award titles will take the form *Subject A (major component) with Subject B (minor component)*.
18. To gain a combined bachelor's degree with honours a student must successfully achieve either:
 - a) a maximum of 320 credits in the major subject component and a maximum of 200 credits in the minor subject component from the pool of compulsory or



option modules plus a minimum of 40 credits in either subject component at SCQF level 10 as a dissertation or final project

- b) a minimum of 240 credits in the major subject component and a minimum of 120 credits in the minor subject component from the pool of compulsory or option modules plus 80 credits from either subject component from the pool of compulsory or option modules plus a minimum of 40 credits in either subject component at SCQF level 10 as a dissertation or final project.

19. Table 2 (major component) and Table 3 (minor component) set out the minimum and maximum credit requirements in each subject component from the pool of compulsory or option modules to gain a combined bachelor's degree with honours and all associated exit awards.

Table 2: Minimum and maximum credit requirements for a major subject component to gain a combined undergraduate award

AWARD TITLE	CREDIT TO GAIN AWARD	MAJOR COMPONENT	
		MINIMUM CREDIT	MAXIMUM CREDIT
Combined bachelor's degree with honours	480	240	320
Combined bachelor's degree	360	200	260
Combined diploma of higher education	240	140	180
Combined certificate of higher education	120	80	80



Table 3: Minimum and maximum credit requirements for a minor subject component to gain a combined undergraduate award

AWARD TITLE	CREDIT TO GAIN AWARD	MINOR COMPONENT	
		MINIMUM CREDIT	MAXIMUM CREDIT
Combined bachelor's degree with honours	480	120	200
Combined bachelor's degree	360	100	140
Combined diploma of higher education	240	60	100
Combined certificate of higher education	120	40	40

Amending, withdrawing or closing taught award or credit-bearing provision

20. The process for amending an approved taught award or credit-bearing provision is set out in [Quality Framework Section 0c: Amending approved taught award or credit-bearing provision](#) while [Quality Framework Section 3: The withdrawal of taught award or credit-bearing provision](#) sets out the process to withdraw or close taught award or credit-bearing provision.

Systematic review of taught award or credit-bearing provision

21. The cyclical review process described in [Quality Framework Section 2b: Institution-Led Review](#) provides an opportunity for programme teams to systematically review and re-approve all taught award or credit-bearing provision.



APPENDIX 1: PLANNING TIMESCALES

In recognising the diversity of provision offered by the University, there are no fixed University timescales for the approval of new taught credit-bearing provision. However when developing provision, it is important to be aware of University business planning requirements.

Points to be considered when designing and developing a taught credit-bearing module

Modules to be included within programmes which require Edinburgh campus timetabling should ideally be approved at least 12 months in advance of delivery. In exceptional cases, where this is not possible, the latest possible deadline for module approval to enable inclusion within the Trimester 1 timetable is the end of February in the academic year prior to the module being delivered (trimester two must be approved no later than June in the academic year prior to the module being delivered. Modules to be included in programmes which require Edinburgh campus timetabling in trimester three must be approved no later than December of that academic year). While these timeframes specifically refer to modules requiring campus-based timetabling, adhering to these timeframes for all modules will support students in making their module choices and in being more clearly informed regarding their programme content.

Points to be considered when designing and developing a taught credit-bearing programme

It is anticipated the programme development lead-in time for most Edinburgh Napier programmes of study will be at least 24 months from early consideration to student enrolment. It is an expectation that new programmes should be outlined in the annual operational plans for Schools and anticipated student numbers should be included in the target setting process.

Programme teams should consider the timeframes necessary for approval and the effective marketing of the programme. The University regulations stipulate that if a programme of study is advertised prior to formal approval being granted by the University, the advertisement must clearly state that the programme is being advertised subject to approval. They also stipulate that any conditions set by the University during the approval process must be met before students can be offered a place on the programme. Consideration should be given to whether the programmes need to be included in University information for prospective students, recruitment fairs etc. and whether students will be recruited via UCAS (lead in time, approximately 18 months prior to student enrolment). To support business planning processes, such as timetabling, programme structures should be approved no later

than February in the preceding academic year that the programme will commence (assuming a tri 1 start).

