

Digital Learning Design Framework and Toolkit

Overview

The Digital Learning Design Framework and Toolkit, which is mapped to the University's Academic Enhancement Framework matrices and Academic Principles is based around a seven-stage systematic design, encouraging extension of the learning environment beyond conventional spaces, weaving together of different modes of delivery (synchronous face-to-face learning with synchronous and/or asynchronous online components), with a purposeful pedagogical underpinning.

The Framework and Toolkit has two primary audiences:

- Course Teams (to use as part of the course design/redesign process and creating space within the session for the Course Team to consider their own individual developmental needs).
- Session Facilitators from the central digital transformation team (who may lead Course Design Events or facilitate discussion with Course Teams to inform course design).

Support

Based around a conversational model, the Framework and Toolkit is used as the underpinning resource for a variety of support around learning design and assessment activities, including the CPD and professional development offered to academic colleagues. The Framework and Toolkit will help staff develop a methodology for seamless and coherent integration of digital solutions; identifying factors to consider when making decisions about what activities are best served online and what are best on campus; how they make that decision. The central team can support staff in working through suggestions and key questions within each section of the Framework, informing the course design process, structured around student centeredness, providing a deep, analytical and robust design tool for the design of learning from a student journey perspective, thereby developing and maintaining an academic quality offer that is rigorous and high-quality.



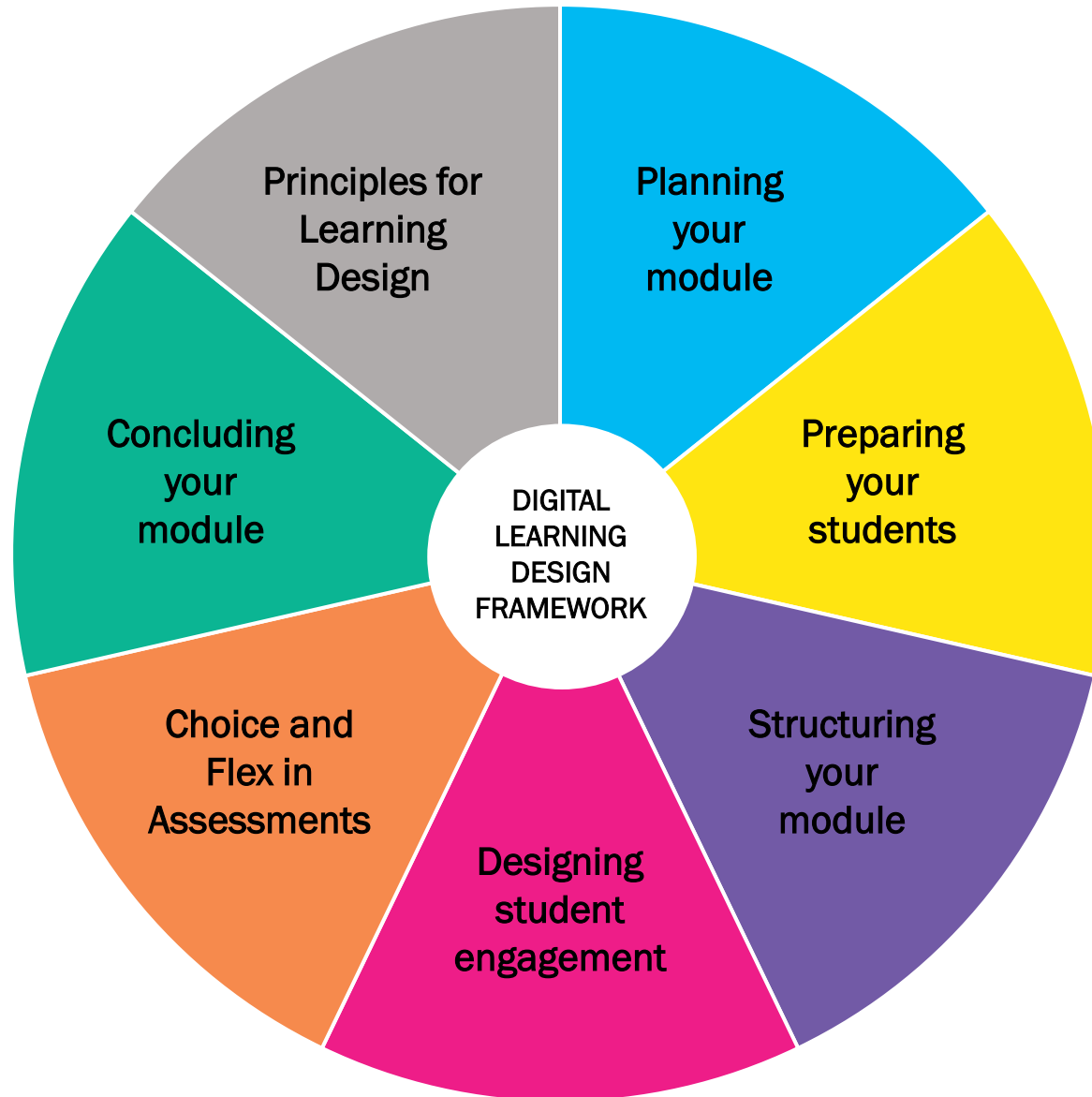
Teesside
University



Digital Learning Design Framework and Toolkit

A close-up, artistic photograph of a glowing incandescent lightbulb. The bulb is the central focus, with its glass envelope and internal filament clearly visible. The light it emits creates a warm, golden glow, which is reflected on the bulb's surface and the surrounding environment. The background is dark and out of focus, with some blurred light sources, suggesting a dimly lit room. The overall mood is one of inspiration and innovation.

Introducing the framework



Authors and Contributors



Dr. Ann Thanaraj is Principal Fellow and National Teaching Fellow (AdvanceHE). At Teesside University, Ann is Assistant Academic Registrar leading the digital transformation of learning and teaching at institutional level. Ann led a university-wide strategic and change transformation project in Online Learning which to-date has achieved 90% retention of learners. Ann is also founder and host of Lawyering in a Digital Age, an international initiative which brings together a global interdisciplinary audience to shape the direction of legal education fit for a digital age.



Paul graduated from Teesside University with a first class honours degree in Computer Studies. Paul is a Senior Fellow (AdvanceHE). Paul's experience in digital learning spans over 24 years. Most recently, Paul's work has contributed to Teesside gaining recognition as a sector-leader through a mandatory Digital Development Programme for all teaching staff which, to date, reports a 96% satisfaction rating from participants, enabling the University to accrue the largest concentration of HE Microsoft Innovative Educator Experts (MIEEs) in the UK (2018-19 and 2020).



John is a Senior Fellow (AdvanceHE) and holds a Masters in Online & Distance Education from The Open University. John provides digital transformation services to members & customers of Jisc in the form of thought leadership, training, guidance & facilitation as a 'critical friend'. He has been a keynote speaker at international conferences in the UK, USA, Germany and South America. John has kindly agreed to support the development of this work due to its importance for the sector and to ensure relevant international and national perspective are considered.



Archana Chathangoth was a final year journalism student at Teesside University when she began working with us on this project. As a full time, student, Archana has experienced student life during the pandemic when the campus was functioning in a hybrid system and later completely online. Archana's student journey shaped the thinking of this framework and toolkit, adding a unique student voice to the project.

Digital Learning Specialists



2021-2025 KPI:

To extend the areas of excellence in digital learning design and bring transformational change in educational design and delivery by leading excellence through Digital Learning.

Introducing the Digital Learning Design Framework and Toolkit

Objectives and Ambitions

Designing learning offers opportunity to think about learning design and how things could be done differently, this will be critical to student success. Therefore, digital confidence and fluencies of teaching staff who design and deliver courses needs developing.

We have two intended audiences:

1. Course Leaders: use the toolkit with their Course Team to inform the design of their Course.
2. Facilitators: who lead a Course Design event, attended by Course Teams, to inform the design of Courses.

Purpose

The purpose of our collaboration is to share with the sector guidance that we have used at Teesside University and yielded positive results in transforming course design practices.

The Digital Learning Design Framework and Toolkit can be a fundamental action you take to ensure we can move towards effective and creative learning design in a structured and supportive way.

How the Toolkit was Developed

Working in collaboration with Jisc to develop the toolkit brings a wide scale national and international dimension to digital learning design.

An extensive study was undertaken by looking globally for examples of how we can measure the quality of what we are seeking to achieve for our students, to shape the quality of online teaching, the academic experience of online teaching and learning and the quality of learning designs for online courses.

The benchmarking findings are presented on the following screen.

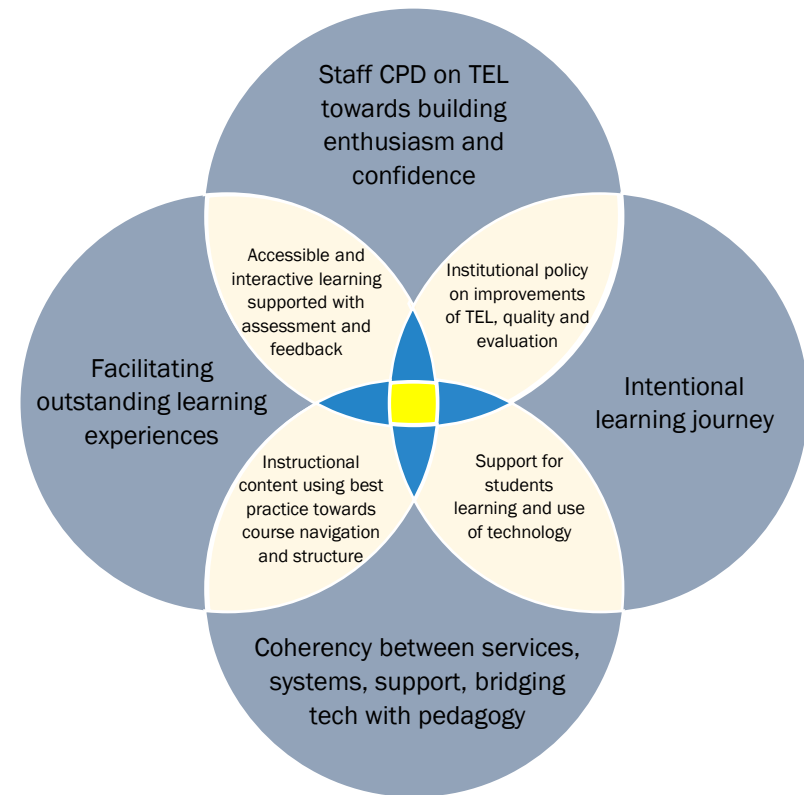
Introducing the Digital Learning Design Framework and Toolkit

Literature Review

Literature Review of high-impact Online Learning from Canada, Australia, Canada, the US and the Commonwealth, conducted by Archana Chathangoth.

Benchmarks reviewed:

- [ACODE Benchmarks for Technology Enhanced Learning](#)
- [ELM Quality Assurance checklist](#)
- [Commonwealth of Learning: Quality assurance rubric for blended learning SCALA framework](#)
- [State University of New York Online Teaching](#)
- [National institute for digital learning, Dublin City University](#)



Introducing the Digital Learning Design Framework and Toolkit

Using the Digital Learning Design Framework and toolkit

- ① The Toolkit contains 7 sections, as indicated by the diagram and subsequent slides in this slide deck; 1 section discussing underpinning principles of learning design and 6 sections framed around the key stages of academic experience.
- ② There is no set order in which these sections need to be addressed but it is important that all are considered throughout the course design phase. It is intended that Course Leaders or session Facilitators can tailor their use of the Toolkit to suit their needs, approaching the various sections in the order that works best for their specific scenario.
- ③ These slides can be printed to produce physical copies or can be used electronically, with the order of each section rearranged if necessary.
- ④ It is important that the order of slides within each colour-coded section is maintained and that slides are not moved from one section to another.
- ⑤ For more information please contact elarning@tees.ac.uk

 **AEF Matrix Key**

Introducing the Academic Enhancement Framework (AEF) matrix

- Excellence in learning and teaching at Teesside University is defined and empowered through Future Facing Learning (FFL) and driven by the Learning and Teaching Strategic Plan.
- The Academic Enhancement Framework (AEF) captures the University's learning and teaching core values. The mapping of the AEF into sector leading guidance on designing courses and learning experiences, offers course teams a coherent framework for how learning experiences should be designed at Teesside University.
- The Academic Enhancement Framework (AEF) provides a mechanism through which Course Teams can engage meaningfully with FFL and other key strategic themes relating to the student experience.
- The AEF is the mechanism through Future Facing Learning and other strategic priorities are applied to course design and delivery.
- All elements of the AEF are pertinent to course design and delivery across the University
- Course Teams are encouraged to contextualise these according to the needs of their discipline, students and stakeholders.
- Each section of the toolkit offers examples of which elements of the AEF are reflected into the course design and how you and your course teams are meeting the University's expectations of embedding the AEF into course design. We have chosen AEF elements which relate directly to course design and learning experiences. Remaining AEF elements which relate to student support and care are available at the end of the toolkit.
- Our approach to mapping the AEF has been meticulous and we encourage course teams to interpret the AEFs within the context of their subject discipline, learner needs and the future of professions and industries into which students within your courses are likely to be part of.

- Digitally Empowered
- Research Active
- Globally Connected & Socially and Ethically Engaged
- Future Ready
- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Wellbeing
- Transitions

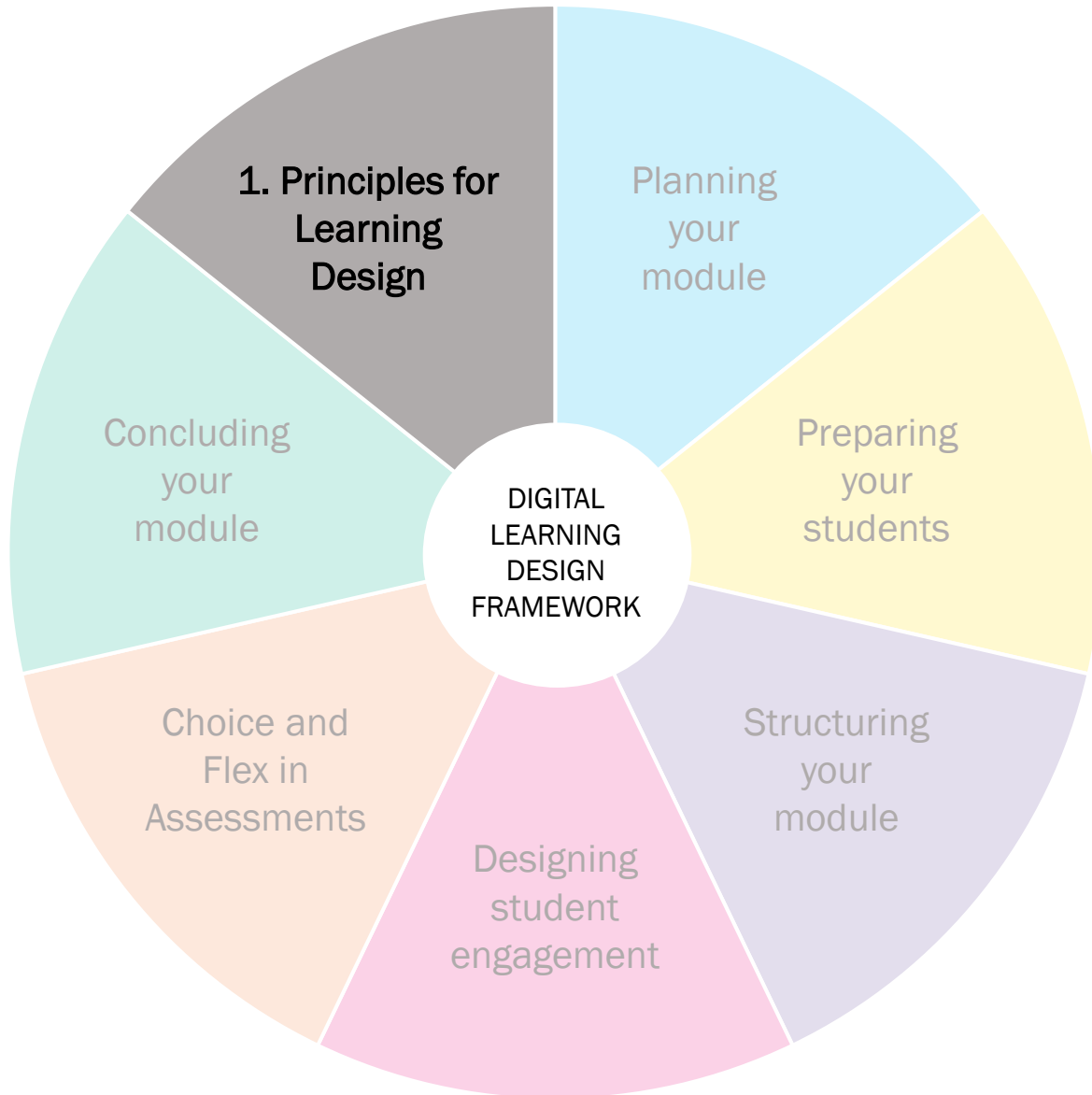
Introducing the new Principals of Academic Delivery

The following principles were approved by the Academic Board in July 2022 and will be applied to new Full Time Undergraduate intakes from September 2023

1. Minimum students numbers on eligible modules.
2. Students should study four modules per level, with a minimum of 20 credits per module.
3. Each student will complete one module at levels 4 and 5, which directly prepares them for graduate level employment and/or enterprise.
4. Resilient staffing plans for each module must embed a team-teaching approach. This includes robust staffing contingency planning to ensure the sustainability and quality of delivery.
5. Where appropriate, curriculum design should embrace a cross-University approach to course delivery.
6. Lean assessment strategies must be embedded which avoid the bunching of assessments during key periods and remove the use of compound assessments (elements). Bespoke assessment strategies will enhance academic integrity.
7. Implicit pre- and co-requisites in teaching delivery must be avoided.
8. Early reassessment opportunities must be provided.
9. Optional modules will be permitted at level 6 only, where linked to professional specialisation and are subject to all of the above principles. Optional modules may be standalone or an existing core module.

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Introducing the toolkit



- ① Affordances of authentic and creative assessments and digital solutions
- ② Future ready and digitally empowered learners
- ③ Embedding Digital literacies in course design



Affordances of authentic and creative assessments and digital solutions

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Future Ready

Overview

In a technologically rich and constantly evolving knowledge economy, a sense emerges that knowledge cannot, by itself, provide the core of an authentically future facing higher education. In course and module design, it is necessary to create learning conditions, opportunities and environments which support the development of each individual learner's creative capabilities to seek out and face everyday problems, as well as enhance their capacities for future success.

We must provide a clear reference point for **creativity in our learning designs, allowing sufficient space for innovation, for appropriate risk taking, and for experimentation.** We must also find ways of **valuing the role of 'relative failure'** as an integral part of the creative learning process, since initial mistakes will eventually allow for improved outcomes. The acceptance of failure and experimentation, as much as the reward for success plays a key part in developing individual resilience and offers an incentive for innovation.

What works depends on the types of thinking and learning we want to encourage at any particular moment in the **student learning journey.** It is also heavily dependent on the **learner and their progress. Students need sufficient time and space in the curriculum to allow them to develop their creativity.** Providing **incremental opportunities for students to develop confidence** in their ability to **explore and experiment.**

LTE Online. (n.d.). Nurturing Creative Learners. Sam Elkington. [online] Available at: <https://blogs.tees.ac.uk/lteonline/learning-and-teaching/nurturing-creative-learners/> [Accessed 18 Oct. 2022].



Affordances of authentic and creative assessments and digital solutions

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Future Ready
- Globally Connected *and* Socially and Ethically Engaged
- Transition

Considerations

- ① Students are given the autonomy to choose to work in new and interesting ways enabling all students to be creative in ways appropriate to their own experience and learning situations.
- ① Supporting students to manage their own learning strategies by providing flexibility and choice in the kinds of work they engage with and produce, encouraging and valuing their efforts to be creative.
- ① Students are challenged through authentic, demanding, and meaningful work. Encouraging students to embrace unfamiliar tasks and working practices, be open to new ideas and perspectives, and recognise opportunities to create new and build on existing knowledge and insight in real-world learning situations.
- ① Assessment is intentionally designed to allow for outcomes which are not narrowly predetermined or fixed, which emphasises assessment of 'process' to draw together and apply their learning throughout a module or course and provide important opportunities for students to demonstrate their creativity.
- ① Fostering a learning environment that encourages active engagement, reflection and personal development, supporting students to collaborate with others, communicate their ideas, showcase their abilities and make the cognitive, relational and cultural connections.



Future ready and digitally empowered learners

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Future Ready
- Globally Connected *and* Socially and Ethically Engaged
- Transition
- Wellbeing
- Research Active

Overview

Nurturing creativity and resilience, two core attributes of future-ready learners, requires curriculum and learning designs that move beyond an emphasis on the 'acquisition' of knowledge and understanding, to favour more engaged, creative, authentic, collaborative learning. Enabling creative learning in this way helps students to appreciate new insights and confidently put their learning to work in ways that enable them to adapt to and thrive in different situations and scenarios.

It is important to acknowledge that different disciplines will recognise and value different forms and combinations of these attributes.

- **Authenticity:** taking ownership of initiatives and tasks by actively constructing and making judgements on their own knowledge and understanding of concepts and relationships relevant to real-world contexts.
- **Curiosity:** analyse, refine and evaluate existing knowledge to create unique and cogent ideas and artefacts.
- **Receptivity:** openness to new and different knowledge, ideas and perspectives and the ability to connect and work with others, to communicate ideas and to pursue novel perspectives on and solutions to problems.
- **Personal Flexibility:** evidenced through accountable and evaluative behaviour.
- **Resilience:** evidenced through self-regulated and adaptive behaviour.



Future ready and digitally empowered learners

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Research Active

Considerations

- ① To what extent are you providing opportunities for students to confidently practise, and apply their learning in creative ways that reflect and respond to their changing learning needs, motivations, and preferences?
- ① To what extent are you providing flexibility and choice in the kinds of approaches and work students can engage with and produce throughout your module or course?
- ① To what extent does your course/module provide students with opportunities to create new and build on existing knowledge and insight in real-world learning situations?
- ① To what extent does your course/module require students to put forward and showcase their own ideas about and solutions to problems they themselves have researched and defined in meaningful ways?
- ① To what extent is your course/module providing students a variety of opportunities for meaningful and productive disciplinary, interdisciplinary and professional collaborations?



Embedding digital literacies in course design

Links to: 

- Digitally Empowered
- Future Ready

Overview

We define digital literacies to mean the awareness and ability to skilfully use digital solutions to find problems, solve problems, communicate in a variety of ways meaningfully, collaborate with others, create new ideas and develop deep thinking through the active, confident and fluent choice and use of digital solutions for intended outcomes.

It is a core component of the knowledge and skills students need to thrive in the fourth industrial revolution, particularly where professions, industries and sectors are evolving through automation, requiring creative skills that cannot be automated.

Designing digital literacies into your module or course design requires you to ground digital literacies into the disciplinary and professional needs of the course, making the digital literacies relevant to the nature of what and how students are studying and the intended outcomes of their studies.

To incrementally develop students' digital literacies from awareness to fluency requires incremental steps to experiment and building opportunities to confidently articulate their creativity. The use of tools gives students the opportunity to be impactful in their future readiness.

Therefore, the main question here is – what does digital literacies mean for your subject discipline and the likely range of professions students on your course are likely to go into? How will you equip your students with the knowledge, skills and future readiness to thrive in these professions – and what how does digital solutions enable you to achieve this?



Embedding digital literacies in course design

Links to: 

- Digitally Empowered
- Future Ready

Considerations

- ① What does digital literacies for learning mean to you?
- ① What does digital literacies mean to your subject discipline and the professions?
- ① How are the professions and industries changing and what is expected of graduates?
- ① How do digital solutions and attributes contribute to students becoming creative individuals with the capability to thrive in the changing landscape?
- ① Crafting and embedding digital literacies into your course and module design requires going beyond the technical use of tools – so, what are the other dimensions of learning that you would like your students to be able to articulate and showcase?

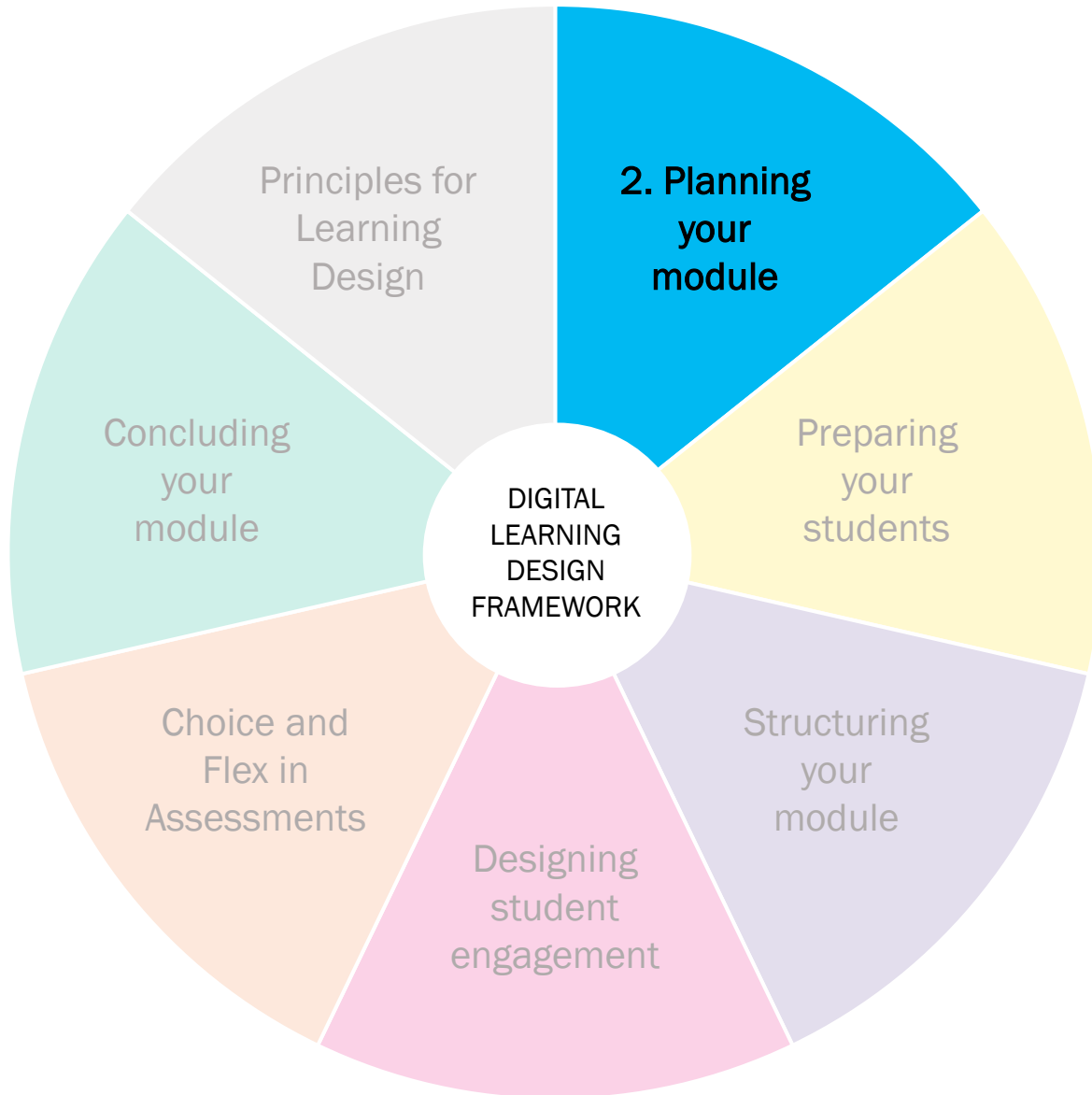


Academic Enhancement Framework: Principals of Learning Design



Summary of AEF links

- Coverage of all aspects of **Digitally Empowered** content including:
 - Our students are co-creators of our learning community. [DE2]
 - Future facing learning and innovation is underpinned by research and evaluation. [DE6]
 - Critical, reflective, and collaborative digital practice that is at the forefront of the sector. [DE7]
- Coverage of aspects of **Student Success** including:
 - Course-wide emphasis on learning, teaching and assessment. [SS4]
 - Students develop critical and academic skills and engage in reflective development throughout their HE experiences. [SS5]
 - Students on-going success dependent on engaging in opportunities provided through their courses and wider HE experiences. [SS6]
- Coverage of aspects of **Student Voice** including:
 - **Empowering Students:** Students become more active participants in their learning when empowered. Fostering collaboration between students and staff provides opportunities for co designing the curriculum and working in partnership with learners. [SV2]
 - **Student Representation:** Course representation is an essential role for formal student voice processes. Effective representation should be inclusive and encourage participation from a diverse range of voices, ensuring all are heard equally. [SV3]
 - **Co-Creation:** The Student Voice ethos should welcome challenge and constructive comment to effect enhancement focused change. Innovations are encouraged enabling students to be co-creators of an enhanced educational experience. [SV4]
- Coverage of aspects of **Future Ready** including:
 - Students engage in a modern and relevant curriculum which develops graduate attributes and enhances future readiness. [FR1]
 - Infrastructure, reflects, supports and enables future readiness; self-awareness and self-efficacy. [FR5]



- ① Deciding how you want to teach
- ② Designing learning opportunities
- ③ Boundary crossing ecosystems of learning
- ④ Designing with inclusivity in mind



Deciding how you want to teach

Links to: 

- Digitally Empowered

Overview

Typically how you want to teach a course or module is your choice, provided the course is designed and delivered as how it has been approved at validation.

As a course tutor, course leader or module tutor, you are the subject matter expert. You know how best to design and deliver your course so that it achieves the maximum benefit and optimal learning for your students. You also have the advantage of understanding your subject to such depths that you will know how best to break down complex information and engage your learners at critical points of learning.

Determining how you want to teach your course, for maximum and optimal learning is one of the most important learning design decisions you will make when you begin to put your course together. You will also have detailed knowledge about the needs of your students and how best students typically learn your subject area, where their typical challenges may be and approaches to mitigate these. You will also be aware of any academic and professional needs of the discipline.

In considering the different roles you may take between teaching on-campus and online, and the best learning design method for your modules, our recommendation is to use the learning ecosystem and tools that you have available in the most meaningful ways for yourself and your students, rather than using digital or face-to-face methodologies if they do not yield the best results.

Constructivism is a learning approach where student discover and construct knowledge and have the opportunity to apply knowledge. This also has the opportunity to lead students into developing a broad range of creative and critical skills. Constructivism is effective only if two conditions are met:

1. there is a clearly designed learning path for students that is clear, logical and systematic for students to follow.
2. tutor presence of high-quality teaching, engaging with students and clear steer in the construction of learning.



Deciding how you want to teach

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Future Ready
- Research Active

Considerations

- ① How do you deliver a campus-taught module? What key considerations go into designing a campus session? What different roles do you take on whilst teaching a campus-based module?
- ① Are there a combination of approaches that are innovative and transformational for your discipline area?
- ① What are the unique features of your module or disciplinary area? Do you teach to bring out these unique features – and how do you do this?
- ① How does your teaching methods help you and your students meet the learning outcomes?
- ① What factors would you consider are key when pivoting campus courses to be taught online – what are the key challenges students may face?



Designing learning opportunities

Links to: 

- Digitally Empowered

Overview

The way in which we design our courses and modules contributes to and influences how students experience, engage and consequently learn. A clear strategy for the seamless integration of digital technologies into our module design is advantageous in allowing the combination of both synchronous and asynchronous teaching, and of online and face-to-face teaching, into a single experience. It also helps build up on students' digital confidence and literacies to navigate different ecosystems of learning.

Alongside how you plan to teach your module, the learning outcomes and assessments will need to drive the identifying, selecting and adopting of pedagogic practices and its complementing digital solutions effectively. The best learning experiences are designed from a student journey perspective.

Instead of attempting to replicate all aspects of teaching styles and learning activities which take place in the classroom into the digital space, which could lead to missed opportunities leveraged by flexibility and collaboration with digital tools, there are a number of key features that contribute to successful integration of digital technologies in terms of course and module design.

A mixture of synchronous and asynchronous with collaboration and a tutor who is frequently 'visible' helps create a successful learning experience. Clear communication in terms of your expectations of your learners is necessary to make synchronous and asynchronous learning a meaningful learning process, with students being clear what is expected of them at different points in time, preferably daily or weekly, or per topic of study.



Designing learning opportunities

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Future Ready

Considerations

- ① Do the classroom learning opportunities and the opportunities online create a coherent approach to how students learn in their module?
- ① Is there an adequate blend of synchronous and asynchronous learning throughout the module? Is this based on pedagogic rationales, learning outcomes and the assessment strategy for the module?
- ① What risk factors have you identified from synchronous/asynchronous learning and how will this be mitigated and addressed in the design of your module?



Boundary crossing ecosystems of learning

Links to: 

- Digitally Empowered

Overview

Whilst accessing content is one of the many functions of a VLE, to achieve successful learner engagement before, during and after a planned activity (whether this is campus based or online), the features and functionalities of a VLE as a space for communication, engagement and collaboration is pivotal for learning.

Familiarity with other digital tools and platforms supported by the University will help with driving forward deep and active learning opportunities within the intended design of the course.

Generating significant improvements in the unitization of learning ecosystems, particularly towards delivering outstanding learning experiences will require some key principles to help teaching staff maximize the affordances of ecosystems of learning, affording alignment with the professional world where fluencies to work in different ways, expertly using different skills and creativity is key:

- The VLE is an extension of a campus learning experience and environment. It is a boundary-crossing ecosystem of learning and student engagement.
- The VLE affords the reimagination of the delivery of modules drawing on seamless integration of the best elements of online and face-to-face practice, considered during course or module design.
- The VLE affords a one-stop hub for the student academic journey which is designed into the heart of a module and course
- The VLE affords space to enable and nurture creativity in learners through collaboration, communication, and construction of knowledge beyond conventional spaces.
- The VLE, together with the campus delivery of a module brings out the best learning experiences for students based on a purposeful pedagogical underpinning and systematic learning design principles.



Boundary crossing ecosystems of learning

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Globally Connected *and* Socially and Ethically Engaged
- Wellbeing
- Research Active

Considerations

- ① How do you use your VLE on your campus-taught module?
- ① What are the innovative elements of your use of the VLE which you would like to keep in the design of your module?
- ① What elements of your VLE use would you like to enhance?
- ① How do you plan to integrate the seamless flow of learning by enabling learning, thinking and conversation across multiple spaces and over time?



Designing with inclusivity in mind

Links to:

- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Globally Connected and Socially and Ethically Engaged
- Transition

Overview

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provides an effective framework to improve the learning experience of all students and reduce the barriers to learning. The main way to do this is to prepare a learning environment where students have what they need to flexibly meet learning goals.

Jisc has produced some excellent resources around designing the academic journey for students with inclusivity in mind:

- <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/getting-started-with-accessibility-and-inclusion>
- <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/creating-an-inclusive-learner-journey>
- <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/inclusive-digital-practice-and-digital-wellbeing>

Key takeaway points include:

- An inclusive approach enables everyone to make the best use of interactive functions and accessibility options on the VLE and other platforms to support differentiation and personalised learning.
- Use digital versatility to provide choice and improve engagement. Build-in activities to co-create relevant and useful activities that can deepen learning. You could:
- Make use of interactive functions and access options on the VLE
- Provide guidelines for flexible, inclusive curriculum and course design
- Use accessible document templates, and inclusive guidelines for creating content

Advance HE's guidance on inclusive curriculum design:

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/inclusive-curriculum-design-higher-education>



Designing with inclusivity in mind

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Wellbeing
- Research Active

Considerations

- ① Is all written content presented as text, so students using assistive technologies can read it?
- ① What does inclusive practice look like in your course design?
- ① How do you make use of the digital solutions and platforms available to you to bring different learners together?
- ① Do the materials have a clear visual structure including headings, sub-headings, lists, and tables? Are materials properly formatted/structured so they are accessible to students using screen readers?
- ① Digital divide and digital poverty is a real concern. Consider also how this may impact your students and the support that can be put in place for inclusive learning including support for health and wellbeing.

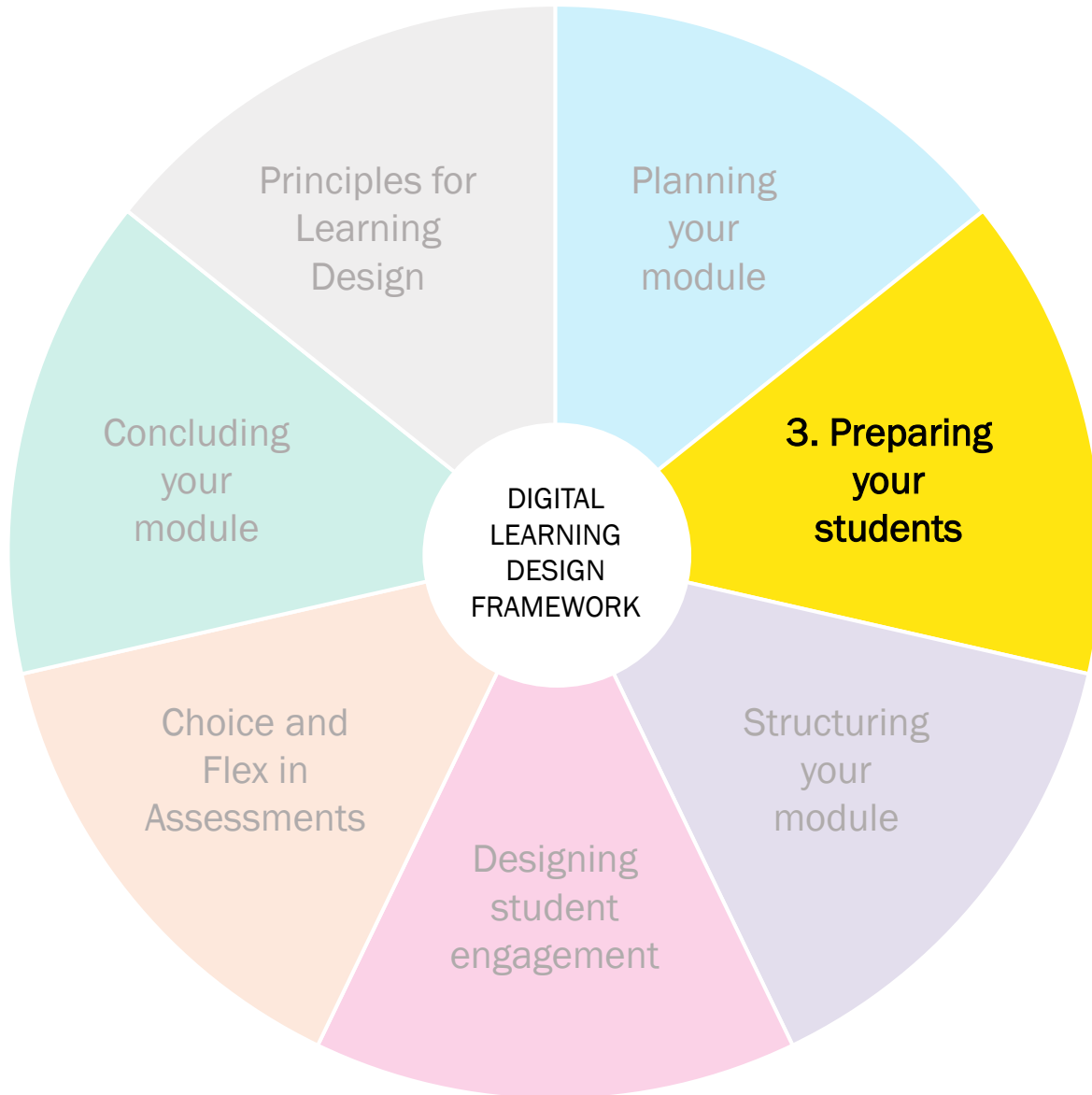


Academic Enhancement Framework: Planning



Summary of AEF links:

- Coverage of aspects of **Digitally Empowered** content including:
 - Our students are co-creators of our learning community. [DE2]
 - Learning Design recognises diversity, and is accessible to everyone. [DE3]
 - Continued development of digital ecosystems that support the Future Facing Learning community. [DE4]
 - Development of Critical, reflective, and collaborative digital practice that is at the forefront of the sector. [DE7]
- Coverage of aspects of **Student Success** including:
 - Students are empowered to embrace Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and challenge barriers. [SS1]
 - Students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning, drawing on data from a variety of sources to inform and shape approaches to supporting student success. [SS2]
 - Tutoring/Academic advising and support enhances the performance, wellbeing, and experience of students. [SS3]
 - Course-wide emphasis on learning, teaching and assessment. [SS4]
- Coverage of aspects of **Future Ready** including:
 - Students engage in a modern and relevant curriculum which develops Graduate attributes and enhances future readiness. [FR1]
 - Students engage in a range of co and extra-curricular experiences to develop life skills, confidence help them realise their ambitions. [FR2]
 - The University infrastructure, reflects, supports and enables future readiness; self-awareness and self-efficacy. [FR5]



- ① Designing a sense of belonging and the student journey
- ② Teacher Presence
- ③ Preparing students for learning
- ④ How do prepare students for the Fourth Industrial Revolution?



Designing a sense of belonging

Links to: 

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success

Overview

Creating a sense of reality and belonging is key to bringing students together and helping them feel part of a learning community. Much of the research into student retention and attainment identifies that being part of an engaging and well-managed online community has a positive impact on student achievement and retention.

We communicate well with students, helping them understanding complex subject matter, the support on offer and how they will be engaging with a course or module – when we are delivering on campus. When delivering online, this poses some challenges. The dispersity of learners and tutors can lead to a sense of isolation and occasionally students may find themselves navigating the course without a helpful and friendly voice guiding them through their journey.

An introductory video prepared by the module leader to welcome students to the module is useful to set the scene and build connections with your learners. It helps them ‘see’ who will be teaching and guiding them through the module. In your video also provide a general overview of what the module is about, explaining its relevance to the full course and how this module interlinks with other modules they will study alongside. It is helpful to outline the sorts of topics students will study, what is unique and relevant about the module, how the module will be delivered, managing expectations, support available, teaching details, learning outcomes, timescales and assessment.

Frequent check-in videos and videos that help students keep track and engage helps with retention and a sense of belonging and community.



Designing a sense of belonging

Links to: 

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Voice

Considerations

- ① A sense of cohort identity and sense of belonging is vital for student learning and retention. How do you plan to establish an online community for your learners?
- ② There are a variety of tools that are useful ice breakers and help create an interactive and engaging environment. What sorts of tools will you use and what purpose will they serve?
- ③ Students may be unfamiliar with how to collaborate online and contribute to online discussions. Consider setting expectations from the outset on this. Be present yourself to respond to and encourage contributions, but be mindful that sometimes tutor presence can also discourage students from engaging with each other.
- ④ In a multi-modal ecosystem of learning, how would you achieve this sense of belonging in the classroom and in the online space?



Designing the student journey into course design

Links to: 

- Digitally Empowered
- Future Ready

Overview

Designing the student journey is akin to laying the foundation to build a house. It offers a robust and creative structure to how students are going to engage in and succeed on your module. Creating space in your module for reflecting on how best to learn is vital including conceptualising what you want students to achieve from your module.

Bringing to life that vision is challenging and rewarding.

How you use your learning ecosystem – the classroom and the Virtual Learning Environment affords a variety of innovative opportunities to transform the learning experience.

To communicate an intentionally designed journey for learners, a study planner could be a useful tool to help keep students progressing and engaging.

The study planner serves to ensure that students always know what they are doing each week with clear signposting to activities expected of them. This will help students manage their learning journey and work towards the building blocks of their course and module in a systematic and timely manner. It also helps to develop a solid academic learning journey for students when studying online. This encourages the learning design to focus on the student journey in its structure, communication, activities and design approaches which goes beyond shifting content online using learning design to a carefully crafted learning structure.



Designing the student journey into course design

Links to: 

- Future Ready

Considerations

- ① What are the key elements of the student journey for your course/module?
- ② What are the guiding principles which determine how you design the student journey into your course?
- ③ How will you communicate through design what the intended journey is for a student?



Teacher presence

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Future Ready
- Globally Connected *and* Socially and Ethically Engaged
- Research Active

Overview

The role of the tutor is crucial to maintain high-quality teaching and excellent student academic experience.

In particular, teacher presence plays a very significant role in developing and sustaining the success of the online community, in keeping students engaged and on track with their learning, just as much as if you were teaching face to face.

A key consideration of designing active learning is the need for tutor presence to support students to scaffold their learning and develop a deep and critical understanding of the subject area. As such, meaningful activities to which adequate time can be afforded to is a key to the effective teacher presence.

Watch a conversation around the significance of teacher presence: <https://blogs.tees.ac.uk/lteonline/2020/12/15/teacher-presence-and-learning-design/>



Teacher presence

Links to: 

- Student Success

Considerations

- ① Consider the significance of the academic in affording the best in class academic experience when teaching online. What role(s) do they play in the different elements that make up the learning activities in a module?
- ② How would you design a module pragmatically where teacher presence, independent learning and creativity and impactful tutor-led interventions are managed and delivered effectively and in a timely manner?



Preparing students for learning

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Voice
- Future Ready
- Globally Connected *and* Socially and Ethically Engaged
- Transition

Overview

Preparation of students key. This will help them stay engaged during the module, participate, feel confident and empowered to succeed when they understand the ethos and value of the module and how it has been put together.

Investing time in preparing students with information around expectations and the module design will keep them engaged, retained and help them progress with understanding of what is expected of them.

Before launching into the content of a module, help your students understand how your module is set out, what elements will be online and what elements will be face-to-face. Help them understand the rationale and what is expected of them and the learning journey they will be experiencing through the module.

Help them become familiar and comfortable with the methods and technologies you plan on using by introducing them from the outset of your module.

Regular, timely communication, particularly in the online space, is extremely important, as is the clarity of these communications to set expectations.



Preparing students for learning

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Future Ready
- Globally Connected *and* Socially and Ethically Engaged

Considerations

- ① Are students familiar with how your module/course is structured?
- ① What sorts of initial activities would you develop for your students to become familiar and confident with the learning platform and other learning tools/technologies that will be used in your module?
- ① When integrating different digital technologies consideration should be given as to how students will be expected to interact and utilise these, both in terms of access to equipment but also the level of digital competency required.
- ① What are the most effective means of communicating with your students to help them prepare for learning in your module?
- ① Will students know where to turn to for support and advice?
- ① Remind students, in preparation for the start of their formal teaching the value of the study planner to guide them through their module including expectations and activities.



How do prepare students for the Fourth Industrial Revolution?

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Future Ready

The World Economic Forum (2016) describes our present era as ‘The Fourth Industrial Revolution’ – the exponential growth of technology, all-encompassing, shaping, mediating and altering every aspect of our lives. This has given us an opportunity to reimagine and redraw boundaries of how we are empower our students to deliver impact on a global scale through curriculum and course design experiences that provide them with the knowledge, skills, and tools to achieve sustainable success in the workplaces of the future.

Our education sector is disrupted by digital transformation and the need to address how we prepare our students to thrive in this changing landscape. The inculcation of digital literacies into course design and student learning needs to extend beyond the use of tech tools and software to demonstrate a wide variety of transferable skills contextualised within the professional and disciplinary knowledge and practice. While different disciplines in higher education may recognise and value different forms of creativity, the ability to think and work creatively is widely recognised as a catalyst for innovation, adaption, and resilience in modern professional contexts. **For example, confidently and fluently making the choice and using the most appropriate tools for communication, critical thinking, problem find and solving and working with resilience and adaptability.**

Further readings:

- Stuart & Shutt (2019) A manifesto for the 21st Century University. WonkHE blog, <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/a-manifesto-for-the-21st-century-university>
- Universities UK (2018) Solving future skills challenges <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/solving-future-skills-challenges.aspx>

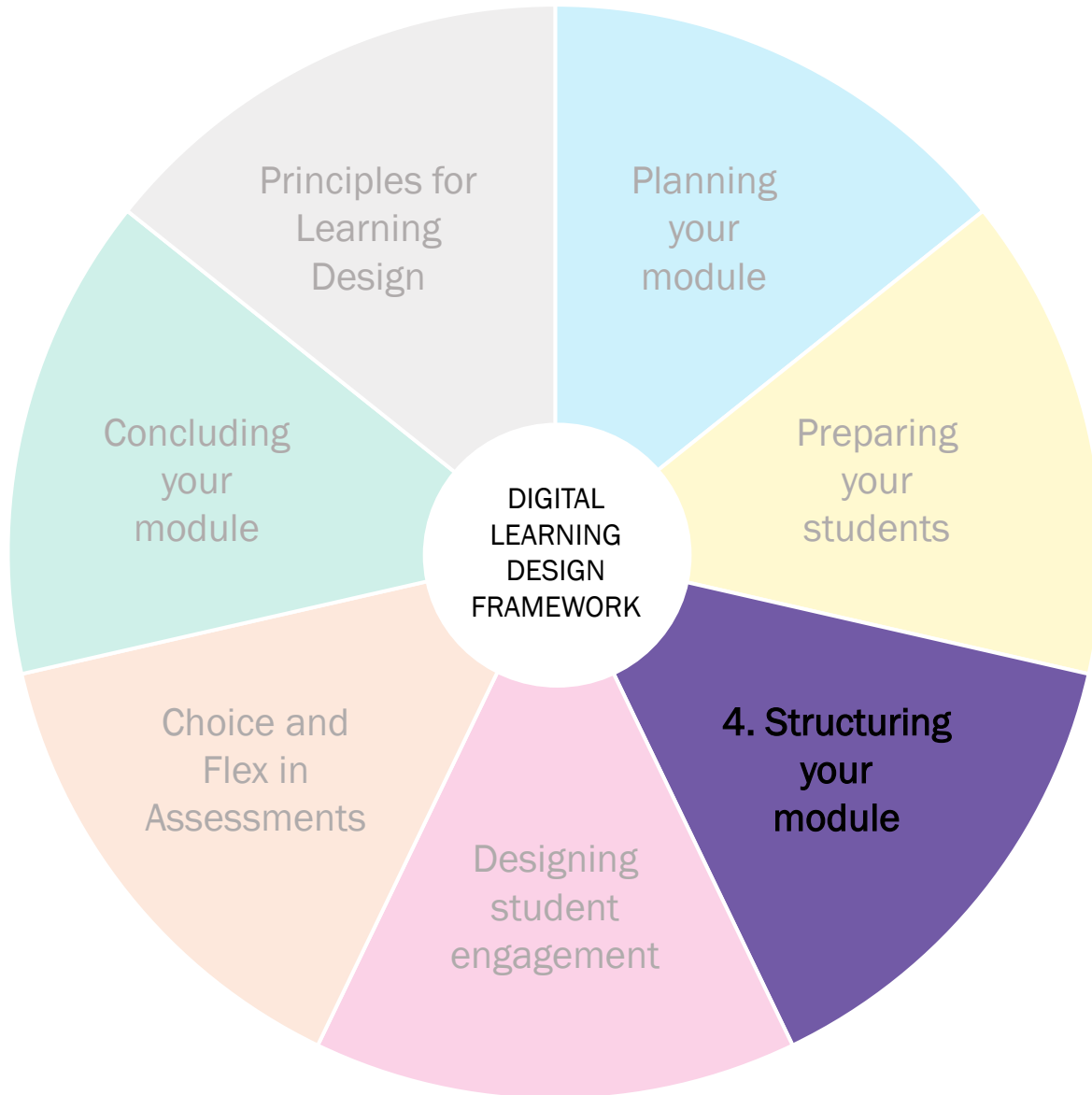


Academic Enhancement Framework: Preparing



Summary of AEF links:

- Coverage of aspects of **Digitally Empowered** content including:
 - Students are confident digital citizens [DE1]
 - Our students are co-creators of our learning community. [DE2]
 - Learning Design recognises diversity, and is accessible to everyone. [DE3]
- Coverage of aspects of **Student Success** including:
 - Emphasis on learning, teaching and assessment providing information on student achievement [SS4]
 - Develop critical and academic skills and engage in reflective development throughout HE experiences. [SS5]
 - Students success dependent on them engaging in their courses and wider HE experiences. [SS6]
- Coverage of aspects of **Future Ready** including:
 - Students engage in a modern and relevant curriculum to develop Graduate attributes and enhances future readiness. [FR1]
 - Students engage in range of co and extra-curricular experiences to develop life skills, confidence help them realise their ambitions. [FR2]
 - The University infrastructure, reflects, supports and enables future readiness; self-awareness and self-efficacy. [FR5]



- ① Designing your learning
- ② Setting up your module



Designing your learning

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Future Ready
- Globally Connected *and* Socially and Ethically Engaged
- Transition
- Research Active

Overview

A learning design framework gives you a step-by-step process to provide a deep, analytical and robust design tool for the design of learning from a student centeredness perspective as a clearly laid out pathway for students to take and as a tool to develop and maintain an academic quality offer that is rigorous and high-quality.

This brings out the best digital learning experiences for students:

- a learner journey that is clear, logical, systematic
- rich pedagogic rationale that is relevant to the subject discipline
- fostering a learning environment that encourages active engagement through collaboration and communication, reflection and knowledge development

A learning design framework encourages the avoidance of practices which resulted in the VLE becoming a ground for simply transferring what happens on campus to online or as a repository of all things that would be covered on campus to online, without carefully planning and designing for the student centeredness of a design principle.



Designing your learning

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Future Ready
- Research Active

Considerations

- ① We advise against trying to move your face-to-face teaching online by recording entire lectures or simply shifting all your content online. Instead a clear learning design framework and intentional student journey plan is needed. It can be as simple as considering what elements of your module do you think will be best delivered on campus and what elements can be best delivered online?
- ① Have you considered how lessons/topics within modules can be presented to students when studying online?
- ① Throughout each topic we encourage providing appropriate learning activities for online learners, for instance, online discussion forums, and ensuring communication, assessment and feedback is continuous throughout the course, all the time thinking of the context in which the online learner is working. How will you create an engaging learning experience across the learning ecosystems – classroom and VLE?
- ① Have you considered how content and meaningful tasks are scaffolded and interwoven, with clear instructions that help students make sense of the purpose of the content and consolidate the knowledge and understanding developed during earlier sessions?



Setting up your module

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Research Active

Overview

At the start of each week/topic, for each module of study, students should be aware of what is expected of them.

Mapping the learning journey in a way where students can understand how one week's learning experience and activities feeds into the next.

Expand upon the weekly plan from the study planner. Instead of text based communication, consider creating a video to explain the synchronous and asynchronous activities across the learning ecosystem which students will undertake during the week/topic. Students may be able to engage with a video quite easily.

The intention is to make absolutely clear to students how they will study, what they are expected to do in the classroom and on the VLE, how they are expected to engage with the materials/content created and how this element (and the learning within) relates to the rest of the module/course.



Setting up your module

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Transition
- Wellbeing

Considerations

- ① A sense of cohort identity and sense of belonging is vital for student learning and retention. How do you plan to establish an online community for your learners?
- ① Students will need to know which technology to use and how to use them? Consider how your learning technology team at the institution may be able to support with guidance for students re access and use.
- ① Digital divide and digital poverty is a real concern. Consider also how this may impact your students and the support that can be put in place for inclusive learning including support for health and wellbeing.
- ① Have a clearly mapped out plan of when key communications are required throughout the module and what information these communications should contain.
- ① Do students know exactly how the module is structured and what is expected of them to complete each week/theme/topic?
- ① Is there a well-structured learning environment that is an active space for learning?
- ① How does your learning design promote active engagement across all ecosystems of learning?
- ① How will you monitor student engagement with the learning in order to identify where further support or potential interventions are required?

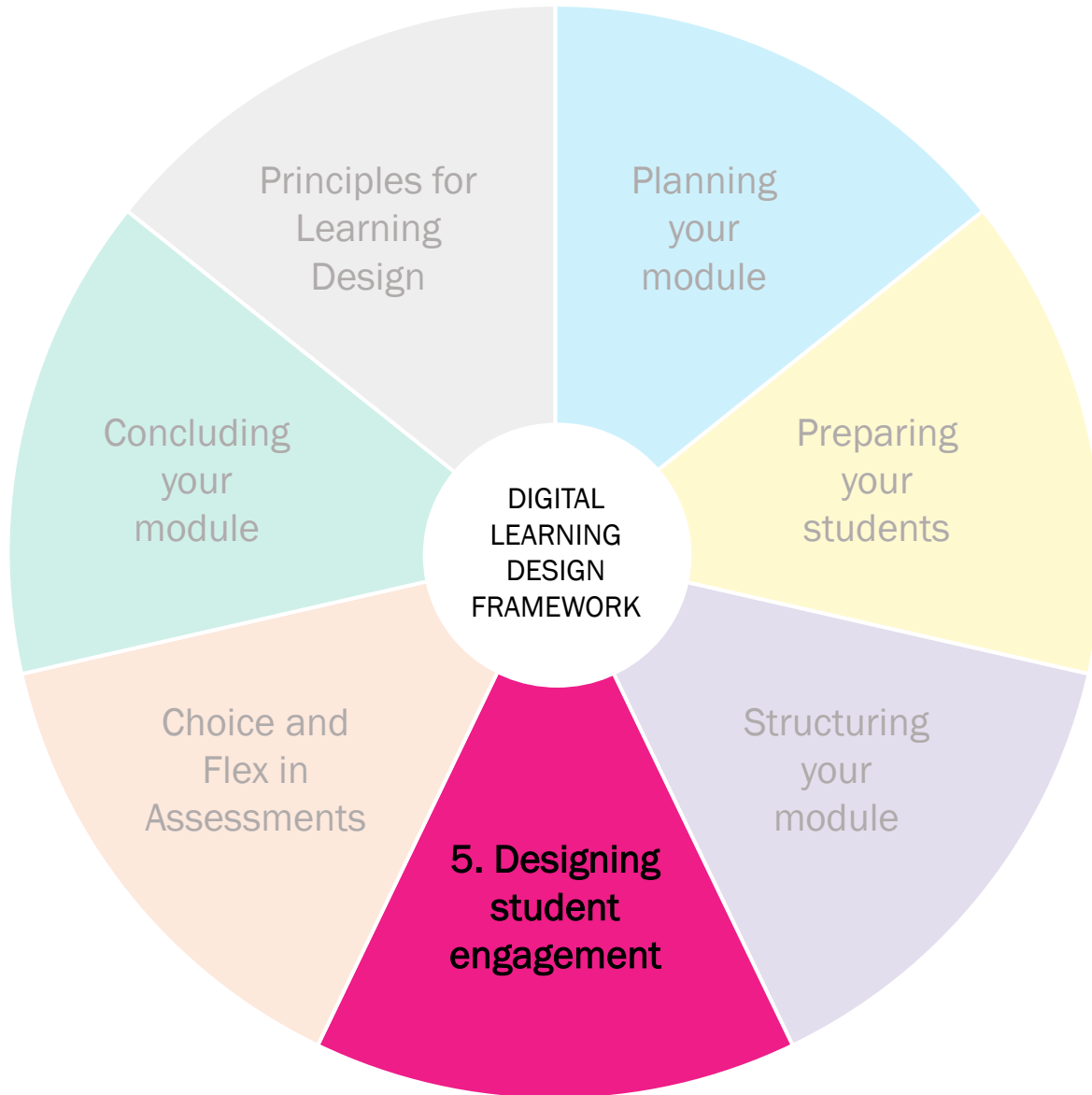


Academic Enhancement Framework: Structuring



Summary of AEF links:

- Coverage of aspects of **Digitally Empowered** content including:
 - Students are confident digital citizens [DE1]
 - Students are co-creators of our learning community. [DE2]
 - Learning Design recognises diversity, and is accessible to everyone. [DE3]
 - Delivery of critical, reflective, and collaborative digital practice that is at the forefront of the sector [DE7]
- Coverage of aspects of **Student Success** including:
 - Tutoring/Academic advising and support enhances the performance, wellbeing, and experience of students [SS3]
 - Students on-going success dependent on engaging in opportunities provided. [SS6]
- Coverage of aspects of **Wellbeing** including:
 - Empower students to understand and engage with wellbeing and the link to learning and performance. [W3]
 - Engender belonging and identity to enable all to build positive relationships. [W4]



- ① Developing student engagement
- ② Mapping and managing student expectations
- ③ Actively building on learning



Developing student engagement

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Future Ready

Overview

Defining 'student engagement' is as complex as trying to define 'student success' or 'excellence' within the context of learning and teaching. When a student is said to be engaged in their course, this could be the time and energy students invest in their learning and the effort that goes into creating meaningful and effective learning that encourages a student to learn (Kuh, 2001). There are several dimensions to student learning.

Digital solutions afford learning to be student-centred, supportive, inclusive and accessible and flexible and collaborative through personalisation and adaptive release of learning materials, assessments and feedback loop that helps each individual student to progress with their construction of knowledge at pace meaningfully.

Similarly, developing engaging learning experiences also means there is space and time for students to be experimental, curious, active learners who are open-minded and willing to deal with complex problems that need multi-layered solutions.

Innovative use of digital technology can enable meaningful engagement opportunities for students.



Developing student engagement

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Future Ready

Considerations

- ① What does student engagement look like on your course and module?
- ① How do you keep our students motivated and actively learning?
- ① How do you know they are actually understanding and learning?
- ① What constitutes excellence in student engagement in quality learning?
- ① How can teaching practitioners from various disciplines be supported better to design effective learning experiences?
- ① Participating and collaborating with each other is vital in the construction of learning. How will the module or course encourage online engagement?
- ① How can you build respect and trust within the student cohort to help them learn from each other? What digital solutions can aid this process?
- ① To what extent is tutor presence required and motivational? Is there a planned way of providing feed-forward comments at key stages of the course?
- ① Does the course involve a variety of interactivity? Do students understand what is expected of them in these interactive exercises and what is the role of the tutor during these exercises?



Mapping and managing student expectations

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Wellbeing

Overview

The role of the tutor is crucial to maintain high-quality teaching and excellent student academic experience.

You play a vital role in managing the student experience and supporting students to progress:

- Clarity of instructions for students each step of the way
- Develop a study planner for robust organisation and communication with students:
- To ensure that students always know what they are doing each week with clear signposting of relevant materials and week/topic content.
- Setting upfront information and schedules around synchronous, asynchronous and collaboration is key to student retention, student participation and success. Preparing students with the necessary digital literacies will require support around digital learning and proficient use of technologies for learning, including an awareness around digital identity, digital creation and collaboration and digital wellbeing.
- Make every part of the design of the online module and activity relevant, setting clear expectations of students, explain why these activities are there for the students
- Don't focus on attempting to replicate all aspects of teaching styles and learning activities which take place in the classroom into the digital space. This won't work.
- Master your technology so that you know the affordances and limits of various digital tools and solutions otherwise it could lead to missed opportunities leveraged by flexibility and collaboration with digital tools.



Mapping and managing student expectations

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Research Active

Considerations

- ① What do you envisage your students doing in the classroom? What do you envisage your students doing online? How will you balance the expected learning and academic experience across the ecosystems?
- ① What questions do students frequently ask in class? Factor these in as you map the student journey and articulate the necessary instructions for students.
- ① In campus-based courses, students rely on introductions and contextualisation of course content and learning activities and formative assessments. Have you considered how you will enable this across different ecosystems?



Actively building on learning

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Future Ready
- Globally Connected *and* Socially and Ethically Engaged
- Research Active

Overview

Adopt an active learning methodology to motivate and keep learners engaged:

For each topic or week, the content may be delivered through:

- Balancing how content is structured meaningfully for delivery across a variety of different methods, whilst balancing the need for application of learning really matters.
- Make every part of the design of the module and activity relevant, also clearly identifiable for the students including setting clear expectations of students, explain why these activities are there for the students.
- If you are utilising videos and slides for online engagement, then we advise the need for bite-size learning materials, recorded using the University's lecture capture service. Voice-over recording is useful too. Each presentation is short and is kept to no more than ten to fifteen minutes so that content can be digested in manageable chunks by students.

A key consideration of designing active learning is the need for tutor presence to support students to scaffold their learning and develop a deep and critical understanding of the subject area.

Less is more. Less activities, spending more time on it with individual or small groups of students is meaningful to coach, mentor and build students' learning. It also allows for feedback opportunities and targeted interventions. Being mindful of this will help you execute your role as a facilitator of learning effectively.



Actively building on learning

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Future Ready
- Globally Connected *and* Socially and Ethically Engaged
- Research Active

Considerations

- ① What is the purpose of the online space/VLE? How does it differ to a classroom environment? How will you use these learning spaces most effectively?
- ① If any taught content will be delivered solely online (synchronously or asynchronously), we encourage breaking down the learning into manageable chunks of time for the students. Have you considered, for each lesson/topic how you would segment the learning so that students are building from foundational knowledge chunks to more complex analytical and critical thinking?
- ① What will your role be in a multi-modal learning ecosystem (in the classroom and the VLE)? Will you play an active role in scaffolding and feed-forward in collaboration tasks?
- ① What sorts of active learning initiatives have you used in your campus-only delivery and how do you plan to create a seamless flow between active learning in the classroom and online?
- ① How well are the online elements integrated with/wrapped around the more conventional teaching materials and learning activities?
- ① Does the course promote high levels of engagement to afford construction of knowledge and learning including the development of skills?
- ① Is it explicit and clearly communicated how often learners need to contribute to learning activities?

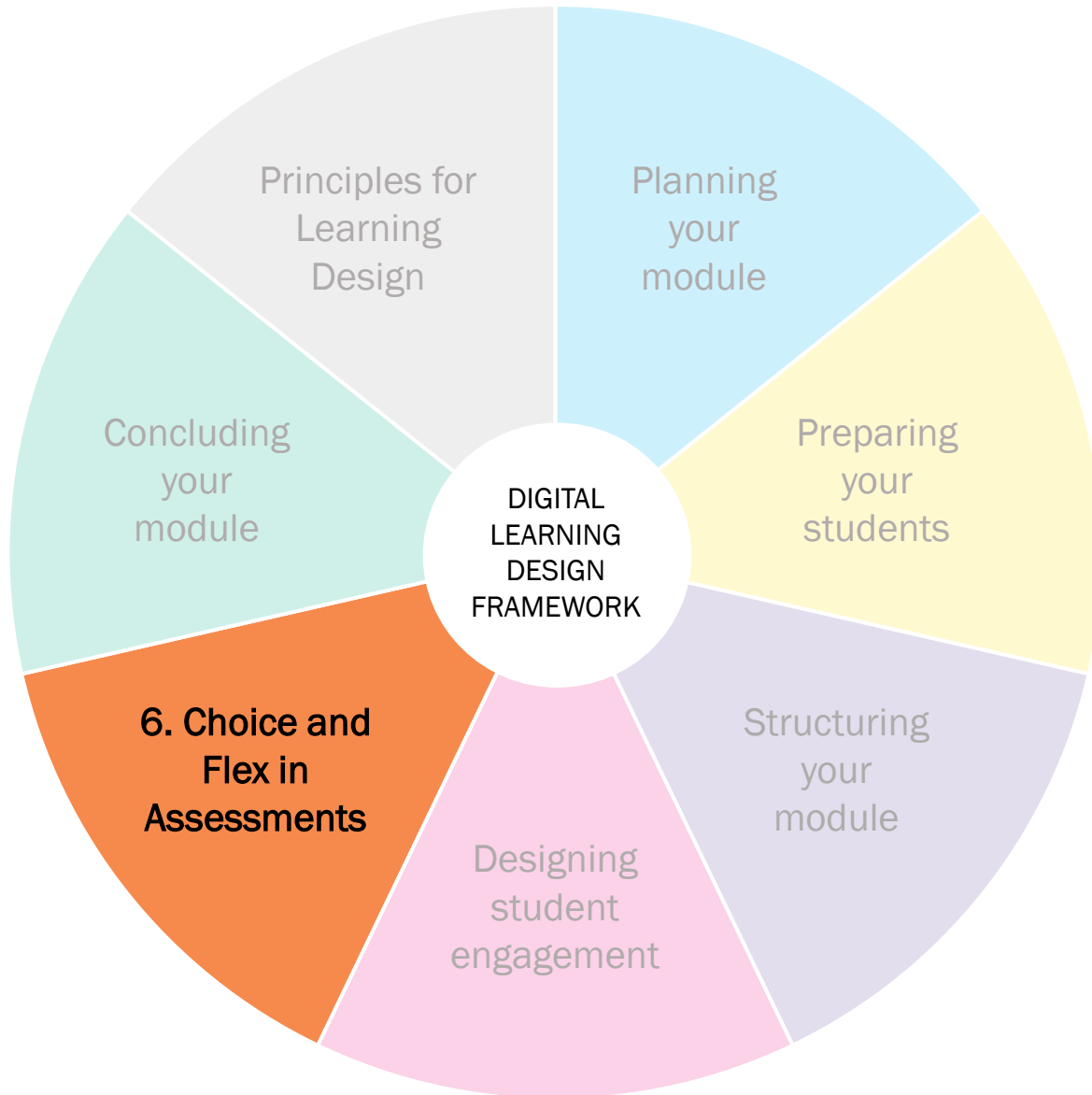


Academic Enhancement Framework: Engagement



Summary of AEF links:

- Coverage of aspects of **Digitally Empowered** content including:
 - Our students are co-creators of our learning community. [DE2]
 - Continued development of digital ecosystems that support the Future Facing Learning community. [DE4]
 - Future facing learning and innovation is underpinned by research and evaluation. [DE6]
- Coverage of aspects of **Student Success** including:
 - Students are empowered to embrace Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and challenge barriers. [SS1]
 - Students success dependent on them engaging in their courses and wider HE experiences. [SS6]
 - Students develop confidence and resilience to navigate a life of learning and graduate employment. [SS7]
- Coverage of aspects of **Student Voice** including:
 - **Empowering Students:** Students become more active in learning when empowered. Fostering collaboration between students and staff to provide opportunities for co-designing curriculum. [SV2]
 - **Co-Creation:** Innovations are encouraged enabling students to be co-creators of an enhanced educational experience. [SV4]
 - **Innovation and dissemination:** Involve students in creation of feedback systems to ensure student engagement in open, honest and balanced feedback. [SV5]
- Coverage of aspects of **Globally Connected and Socially and Ethically Engaged** including:
 - Respectful and ethical, adopt systemic, evidence-based, reflective, responsible, pro-active, respectful, sustainable and ethical working approaches [GC1]
 - Integrate all members of the learning and teaching community, consistently, throughout their journey [GC2]
 - Maximise intersectionality of various relevant agendas in working towards social justice and global citizenship. [GC5]



- ① Developing higher order thinking and transferability of learning
- ② Demonstrating individual learning and showcasing abilities
- ③ Equity of assessment
- ④ Actively engaging with feedback



Assessment:

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Future Ready

Overview

Assessments facilitate the time and space for students to develop original thinking and authenticity, through opportunities that are sufficiently varied and diverse, allowing students to take a proactive role in their learning, demonstrating autonomy to choose to work in new and interesting ways. Assessments are a vehicle through which students develop higher order thinking and transferability of learning and are inspired to use their knowledge and skills to authentically make a difference in the real world.

To do this, the assessment approach provides students with flexibility and choice in the kinds of work they engage with and produce, encouraging and valuing their efforts to be creative. To develop higher order thinking and the ability to transfer learning from controlled environments set out in assessments to the real world, assessments need to engage students in intellectually challenging and demanding ways, beyond surface learning approaches.

Within the context of choice and flex in designing assessments for learning, a key factor is the sustainability of flexible assessment formats, ensuring that assessments are aligned to learning outcomes, assessing these in the most effective way at the most effective time of the learning journey. This allows students to develop familiarity and sophistication in how they attempt similar activities of learning and what is expected of them in different forms of assessments.

This section of the toolkit relates to the [University Assessment and Feedback policy](#)



Developing higher order thinking and transferability of learning

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Future Ready
- Research Active

Considerations

- ① When designing assessments, how do you build in and promote employability skills of learners?
- ① In considering the sustainability of choice and flex in assessments, how do you provide more opportunity for students to grasp expectations of the assessment and utilize feedback in improving the next assessment?
- ① In considering the sustainability of choice and flex in assessments, is there joint planning across the course of study each year in the type of assessment and expectations of students?
- ① Within your module, does the assessment assess the ability for students to demonstrate higher order thinking and transferability of learning and does it take place at the right time of learning within the modules?
- ① How do you design intellectually challenging assessments that allow students the opportunities to demonstrate originality and creativity both in knowledge and in the demonstration of learning?
- ① To continue to develop core graduate attributes and skills grounded in authentic disciplinary and professional values and identities, how do you offer choice and flex whilst maintaining core graduate skills such as large research projects and substantive academic writing pieces?
- ① To what extent are your assessments giving students the opportunity to move away from compartmentalised linear disciplinary learning, encouraging them to engage with and present new ideas and perspectives, to redefine problems and create new knowledge and apply these meaningfully in real-world learning situations?
- ① How do your assessments allow students to develop their digital literacies grounded in authentic disciplinary and professional values and identities?
- ① What guidance/support do course designers and module designers require to create assessments that are both sustainable to their approaches to teaching and that affords higher order thinking and transferability of learning for students?



Assessments:

Links to: 

- Complete AEF
- [Learning & Teaching Assessment & Feedback policy](#)



INCLUSIVE ASSESSMENT



Assessment processes need to provide an accessible, equitable and relevant learning experience for all students across a course of study.



Considering individual differences between students, employing different combinations of assessment methods and support to meet the diversity of learning needs for different groups of students.



LEARNING-FOCUSED



Assessment activities need to be aligned at course level to ensure assessment processes and tasks are authentic, designed to achieve key outcomes, and direct students towards appropriate learning.



Designed to actively involve students in assessment processes in ways which develop their ability to self-monitor, regulate their own learning behaviour, and when feedback is appropriately future facing and can be acted upon in timely and meaningful ways.



SHARED AND TRANSPARENT



Assessment and feedback processes are clearly articulated, relevant to context, and designed to enable meaningful action in the ways they foster student learning.



Students develop a good understanding of the requirements of assessment and how the overall assessment design fits together, including familiarity with the related terminology, standards and criteria, assessment methods, skills and technologies/tools.



Assessments: Choice and flex in assessments for inclusive and personalised learning

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Future Ready
- Globally Connected *and* Socially and Ethically Engaged
- Research Active

“Time to rethink assessment and feedback processes” - (Brown and Sambell, 2020)

- A lack of relevance to students’ future lives.
- A limited range of assessment types and formats.
- Feedback often an afterthought in assessment design

Transforming Assessment = four integral areas (Advance HE, 2020)

- Assessment Design – Assessment methods diversified to improve their validity, authenticity, and inclusivity, making them clearly relevant and worthwhile in the eyes of students and firmly focused on assessing 21st century learning outcomes.
- Students Engagement – Students offered greater opportunities for active involvement in assessment, with a clear voice regarding their assessment experiences.
- Staff Development – The assessment literacy of academic staff is paramount for such transformation to take hold and be sustained.
- Infrastructure – Available technologies effectively harnessed to enhance assessment practice, improve feedback processes, and streamline assessment information and administration

Shift priorities from formulaic approaches of content learning to tasks that focus on the process of learning and that are sensitive to the needs of students, giving them more control over assessment processes (Jones-Devitt, Lawton and Mayne, 2016).

- **Personalise Student Learning:** Using a variety of assessment rather than relying on one or two signature (high-stakes) assessment methods (i.e., written exams).
- **Diversify Your Approaches:** Consider how combinations of different assessment methods and tasks might meet the learning needs and preferences of diverse student groups.
- **Allow Learner Choice:** Provide students with the opportunity for negotiated and managed choice between an accepted range of ‘alternative’ assessment methods.
- **Support Learner Agency:** Students gradually introduced to the idea of flexible assessment at a module level, where early low-stakes (formative) assessment tasks are broken-down to afford a degree of choice.
- **Be Practical and Realistic:** Do not assume all students have the same access to technology or have had the same experience. Remove limiting conditions that are not necessary for making accurate judgements on student work.
- **Keep Things Accessible:** Flexible assessment arrangements ‘work’ across a spectrum of settings and device specifications whilst still meeting key learning outcomes.
- **Embedding digital literacies and confidence:** Giving students the space to experiment and express their creativity in new and different ways using a variety of tools to problem find and problem solve.



Assessments: Here are some questions to consider

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Student Voice
- Wellbeing
- Research Active

Using a variety of assessment approaches/methods.

- ① Does assessment on your module provide every student with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement?
- ① To what extent are students encouraged to bring their own backgrounds and experiences to bear on assessment tasks?

Incorporating choice and flexibility into assessment design.

- ① To what extent do students have choice in the topics, methods, and criteria, of assessment tasks on your course/module?
- ① To what extent are you providing students with opportunities for regular formative feedback as a way of checking for individual understanding and progress?
- ① How will you build in alignment and continuity between new assessment type(s) and already completed summative assessments, as well as the formative teaching strategies?
- ① Have you considered the sorts of alternative assessment for campus-based assessments, based on the skills students have already developed and not demand complex 'additional' requirements?

Through formative assessment activities, students will benefit from experiencing and experimenting with methods required for summative assessment:

- ① Have you considered how feedback on achievement and areas of development will be made available to students? You can use video or audio feedback on formative assessments that are individual or cohort feedback
- ① Introducing easily actionable learning opportunities for students to trial new practices and build confidence in using tools and technologies and expressing their creativity in innovative ways whilst building on digital skills development.



Assessments: Learner Focused

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Future Ready
- Globally Connected *and* Socially and Ethically Engaged

Take a Course-wide View: Provide a balance of assessment arrangements as they relate to formative and summative work, as well as the distribution and sequencing of assessment types.

Bias Authentic Tasks: Authentic assessments help to frame and contextualise learning and can also simulate ways of thinking and practising in professional life.

Prioritise Formative Opportunities: Utilise easily actionable, and early, 'formative' opportunities for students to trial new practices and build confidence in using learning tools and technologies.

Focus on Improvement: Make use of regular formative opportunities that document student progress and learning in a module, generating evidence that can be used to adapt teaching approaches and feedback to students on their own learning.

Put Feedback to Work: Folding in regular formative feedback is a good way of checking for individual understanding and giving students an indication of where they are in relation to achieving learning outcomes or standards.

Make Space for Meaningful Dialogue: Connecting students through common activities and shared experiences using different forums (i.e. discussion boards) and tools (i.e. shared blogs) provide flexible, timely and accessible opportunities for learners to interact.



Assessments: Here are some questions to consider

Links to: 

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success

Devising authentic assessment environment and worthwhile tasks: To what extent have you considered assessment ...

- ① Conditions: Should it be individual or group-based? Do all students have access to the necessary tools and resources? Is the planned work realistic in the time available?
- ① Format: Is it primarily online, blended or classroom-based? Does the task require the development of disciplinary knowledge or deployment of professional performance?
- ① Problem/Focus: will it be derived from employers, former students or students' experience in professional placements?

Embedding Formative Feedback Opportunities: To what extent are you ...

- ① Clarifying and sharing an understanding of the learning intentions behind assessment activities early on with learners – and what forms does this take?
- ① Providing early formative feedback on learner practice as an indication of how well they have performed prior to final summative work?



Assessments: Shared & transparent:

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Future Ready

Start with Clear Guidance: It is important that we make students aware, early on, of the technical and practical requirements of all assessment arrangements and tasks.

Clarify Learning Expectations: Including opportunities for students to actively engage with criteria for learning through self-evaluation, and the analysis of exemplar work using rubrics, helps students to ‘see’ standards and criteria in concrete ways.

Make Use of Shared Activities: Providing various ‘shared’ activities – i.e. discussion forums, or other forms of peer-to-peer dialogue and learning – promotes active engagement and support in and through assessment processes.

Be Pragmatic About Student Support: Be explicit early on about what tutor-led support is available to students within the assessment process and how and when they can access it sets clear expectations regarding learner support and the student role in this process for assessment tasks.

Promote Integrity and Secure Assessment: It is important we take steps to make sure students understand the importance of ethical working practices when completing assessment work across different modalities of learning.



Assessments: Here are some questions to consider

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Student Success
- Future Ready
- Globally Connected *and* Socially and Ethically Engaged

Enhancing student assessment literacy: To what extent are you ...

- ① Actively nurturing a practical understanding of what constitutes 'good' or quality work in an assessment task?
- ② Making clear to students how the overall assessment design and components of assessment fit together?

Position students as 'partners' in assessment: To what extent are you ...

- ① Promoting the active role of students in the assessment process and clarifying where support is available to them (and in what forms)?
- ② Taking steps to ensure staff and student roles and expectations in assessment are understood?



Assessments: References:

Further reading on assessments

- Boud, D. and Soler, R. (2016). Sustainable Assessment Revisited, *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, Vol. 41, No. 3, pp. 400-413.
- Brown, S. and Sambell, K. (2020). Changing assessment for good: a major opportunity for educational developers. *Post-Covid19 SEDA Educational Developments Special issue*. London: SEDA.
- Elkington, S. (2020) *Transforming Assessment in Higher Education Guide*. Advance HE Student Success Framework Series, York: Advance HE: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/essential-frameworks-enhancing-student-success-transforming-assessment>
- Gunn, V., Morrison, J., & Hanesworth, P. (2015). Equality and diversity in learning and teaching at Scotland's universities, Higher Education Academy Publication. Accessible at: [HEA Report](#).
- Hanesworth, P., Bracken, S., & Elkington, S. (2019). A typology for a social justice approach to assessment: learning from universal design and culturally sustaining pedagogy. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 24(1), 98-114.
- Jisc (2015). *Inclusive Assessment; transforming assessment and feedback with technology*. Accessible at: [Jisc Guide](#).
- Jones-Devitt, S., Lawton, M., and Mayne, W. (2016). HEA Patchwork Assessment Practice Guide. <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/patchwork-assessment-practice-guide>
- McArthur, J. (2016). Assessment for social justice: the role of assessment in achieving social justice. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 41(7), 967-981.
- Sadler, R. (2016). Ah! ... So that's 'quality'. *Wise Assessment Briefing No. 8*. [Wise Assessment Forum](#).
- Tai, J., Ajjawi, R., Boud, D., Dawson, P., & Panadero, E. (2017). [Developing evaluative judgement: enabling students to make decisions about the quality of work](#), *Higher Education*, Vol. 76, Issue 3, pp. 467-481.
- Winstone, N., & Carless, D. (2019). *Designing effective feedback processes in higher education: A learning-focused approach*. London: Routledge.
- LTE Bites 03 – [Inclusive Assessment](#)
- LTE Bites 06 – [Strategies for Embedding Flexible Assessment](#)
- LTE: Considerations and Resources for Digital Platforms and Tools Supporting Alternative Assessments can be found at: <https://blogs.tees.ac.uk/lteonline/digital-delivery-learning-and-support/supporting-alternative-assessments/>

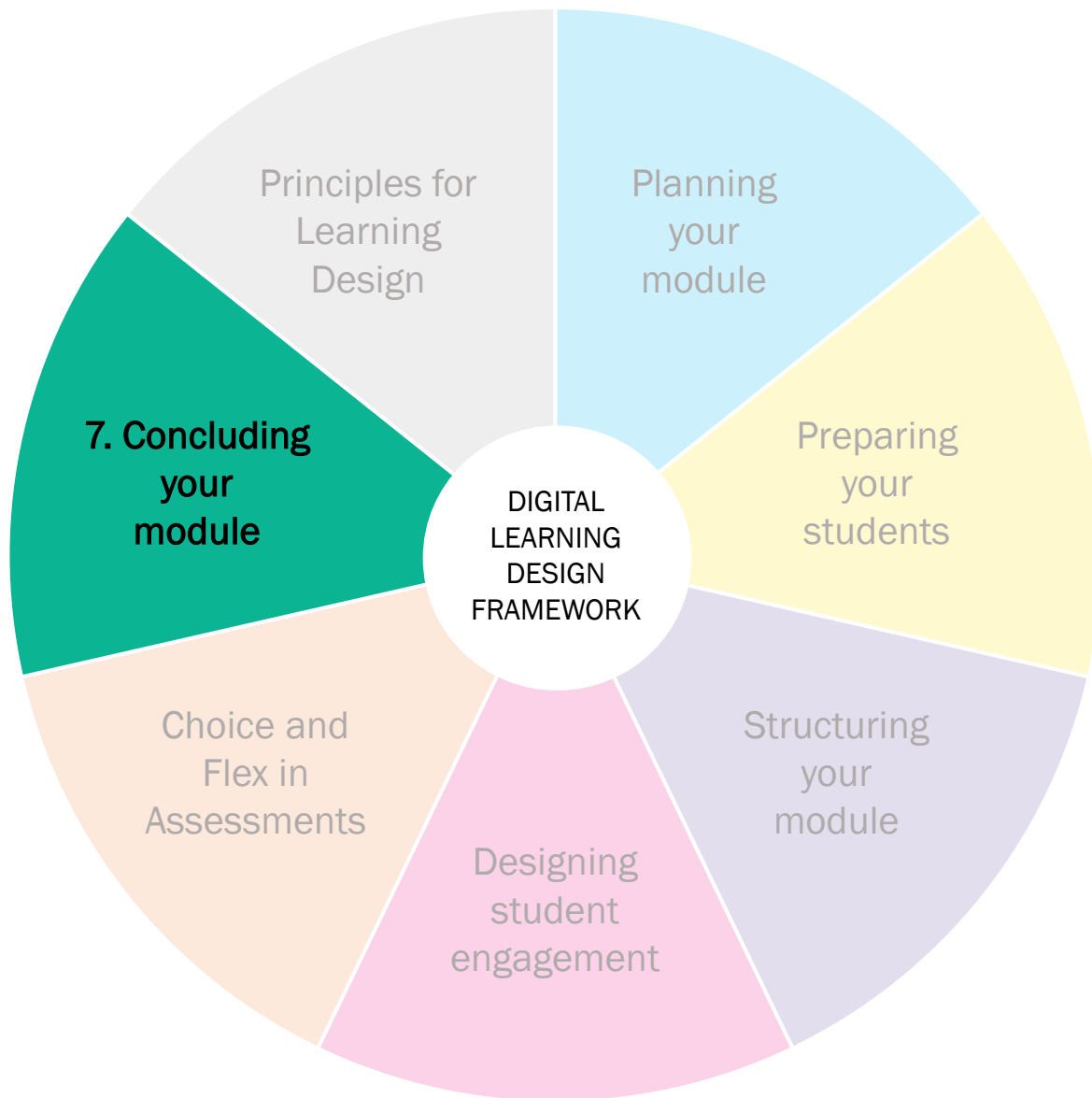


Academic Enhancement Framework: Assessment



Summary of AEF links:

- Coverage of aspects of **Digitally Empowered** content including:
 - Learning Design recognises diversity, and is accessible to everyone. [DE3]
 - Continued development of digital ecosystems that support the Future Facing Learning community. [DE4]
- Coverage of aspects of **Future Ready** including:
 - Students engage in a modern and relevant curriculum which develops Graduate attributes and enhances future readiness. [FR1]
 - The University infrastructure, reflects, supports and enables future readiness; self-awareness and self-efficacy. [FR5]
- Coverage of aspects of **Student Success** including:
 - Emphasis on learning, teaching and assessment providing information about student achievement through flexible, active, and student-led approaches. [SS4]
 - Students develop their critical and academic skills and engage in reflective development throughout their own HE experiences to equip them with the skills and resilience to thrive in a complex and uncertain world. [SS5]



① Further learning opportunities and digital solutions for your learners



Further learning opportunities and digital solutions for your learners

Links to:

- Future Ready
- Globally Connected *and* Socially and Ethically Engaged

Overview

Wrapping up a module is equally important to introducing a module to help learners consolidate their learning within the module and across other modules covered that semester.

Readings that may link to next semester modules to help students develop synergies on the course coherently.

At the end of the module, wrap up the online space, just as you would in your final class on campus, drawing on the successes of the students and how the intended learning outcomes have been met for the course.

Help students articulate how the module covered the intended learning outcomes and the purpose of the assessment and the process of the assessment which gave them the opportunity to showcase various elements of the ILOs.

Talk about the future, particularly how the module fits with the changing knowledge and skills needed for the professional world of work.

Ask students to share their experience of the module. Identify areas for future improvement from module surveys and feedback.

Take a break and come back to reviewing your course or module design. Celebrate and showcase your good practices!







Further learning opportunities and digital solutions for your learners

Links to:

- Digitally Empowered
- Future Ready
- Transition

Considerations

-  Reflect on how you have incorporated the principles of learning design recommended in this toolkit.
-  Given the changing nature of learning and teaching, including the digital transformative potential that innovative digital solutions offer, how do you plan to enhance your module for the next iteration?
-  How will you further contextualise digital literacies and digital empowerment into your course design to build in opportunities for students to develop their digital fluencies?
-  How will you develop your module so that it can be positioned as a catalyst for preparing students for the changing professional workplace, and the relevance it plays in the digital transformation of the students' learning experience?



Academic Enhancement Framework: Concluding



Summary of AEF links:

- Coverage of aspects of **Future Ready** including:
 - Students engage in a modern and relevant curriculum which develops Graduate attributes and enhances future readiness. [FR1]
 - Staff embrace leadership, entrepreneurial and future ready skills across, within and alongside the curriculum.. [FR4]
- Coverage of aspects of **Globally Connected and Socially and Ethically Engaged** including:
 - **World knowledge and skills:** Capture and embed the wealth of experiences, knowledge, skills, expertise from any parts of the world that is contributed by all members of the learning and teaching community. [GC3]
- Coverage of aspects of **Transitions** including:
 - Students are co-creators of learning communities and play an active role in informing and shaping approaches to transitions at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. [T3]
 - Course teams and Departments work together to develop transitions that are inclusive and provide access to academic, pastoral and professional support. [T4]



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