

Programme design considerations & principles

At Lancaster, we aim to prepare our graduates to *lead responsible, intellectually curious, productive and fulfilling lives*, and at the heart of this student experience is their programme of study.

What is a programme?

A programme is the holistic student educational experience for the duration of their study, which leads to the award of a degree or certificate. The programme is constructed of a series of connected modules (core and optional), along with students' their engagement in enhancement and enrichment activities outside the core curriculum.

Programme vision

A programme starts with a coherent vision, this will support the educational aims. When writing your programme vision, think about the long-term student experience. Ask yourself, what do you wish your students to have gained by the end of their studies? For UGs this may be 3 or 4 years, for PGTs this may be 1 or 2 years. The programme vision can be unpacked through the educational aims and the values of the programme team.

English Literature's vision

At Lancaster we will take you on an exciting journey through a vibrant array of authors, genres, historical periods, literary movements, techniques and critical approaches.

Programme educational aims

These are broad statements, which unpack your vision and intentions of student learning. They may also be influenced by professional and regulatory body requirements. When writing your educational aims, consider how well they meet your programme vision. It is also an opportunity to think about responding to the University's education strategy commitments, such as employability and equal opportunities, and our commitment to a research-led curriculum.

Environmental Biology Educational Aims include:

Provide a flexible but structured, progressive and thematic training in Environmental Biology.

Encourage academic curiosity, which will prepare students for lifelong learning.

Offer all students the opportunity to conduct a substantial research project.

Offer a broad range of modules within which students can select a specialised route.

Programme learning outcomes (PLOs)

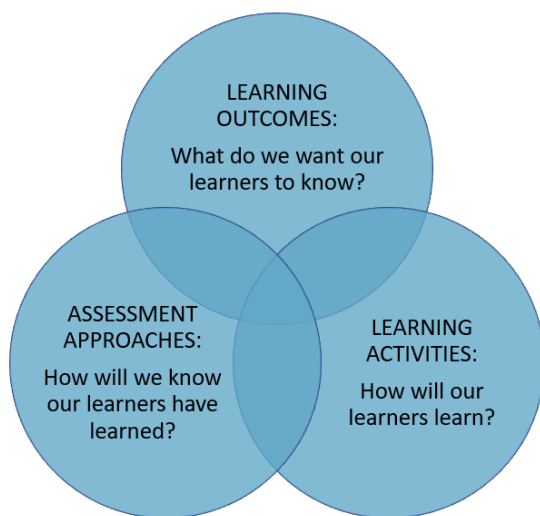
To successfully graduate, students must be **able to demonstrate they have achieved all the PLOs**. Learning outcomes at programme level should be expressed as general areas of learning such as, skills and understanding which support developing graduate attributes, rather than specific curriculum details. The optimum number of PLOs is 6-8, with 10 maximum and should reflect the level of learning (see the [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications \(FHEQ\) document](#)). Remember all

programme modules must be mapped to the PLOs to be able to demonstrate how students will achieve them.

The Educational Development website has [information on writing clear learning outcomes](#).

Constructive alignment

Constructive alignment is the basis for programme (and module) development. This emphasises that the learning outcomes, the assessment tasks and the student learning activities should be clearly linked (aligned). Thus, student learning activities should explicitly develop the knowledge and skills expressed in the learning outcomes, and assessed during the programme (or module).



Assessment & feedback (A&F) strategy

Only through taking a holistic and strategic view of the whole programme A&F can the programme team judge the connections with the learning outcomes, and in turn, the development of student assessment literacy, graduate attributes and educational experience. The Academic Standards and Quality (ASQ) webpages have a useful document, which supports [programme assessment](#)

[mapping](#). Mapping the programme A&F supports the programme team to consider the spread, weighting, timing, form of assessment, along with the consistency and connections between feedback and feedforward across the whole programme of study.

External reference points

All programmes must align with [QAA subject benchmark statements](#), which are part of the [QAA Quality Code](#) for setting and maintaining academic standards. For some subject areas there are specific professional standards, these offer guidelines that sometimes need to be adhered to. These external reference points, alongside the [FHEQ](#), make explicit the expectations of standards for bachelors and masters level degrees in a range of disciplines.

Enhancement & enrichment opportunities

There are a wide range of enhancement and enrichment activities offered across the university such as placements, projects, study abroad and 'enrichment days'. Connecting these to programme learning objectives supports the student experience and knowledge development.

Lancaster Education Strategy

The four core [Education Strategy](#) themes of employability, internationalisation, sustainability, and inclusivity, underpin programme development and graduate attributes. The themes provide a framework for thinking about designing and reviewing the programme with multiple lenses.

Graduate attributes

Graduate attributes detail the qualities and skills we expect all students to be able to have developed as a result of studying at Lancaster. It is important that the programme team consider how they can be supported.

Graduate Attributes

Highly skilled and knowledgeable subject-specialists.

E.G. Being aware of relative importance and impact of discipline, locally and globally.

Inclusive, socially responsible, engaged global citizens.

E.G. Being positive about opportunities to operate in a range of different cultural contexts.

Self-aware, open to development and change.

E.G. Equipped with resilience to manage challenge, change and uncertainty.

Fully prepared for graduate employment opportunities, professional in outlook and approach.

E.G. Able to work collaboratively, communicate to a range of audiences and build effective professional relationships.

Summary of guiding principles

The basic principle for designing programmes, modules and any unit of study are the same, and consist of:

- Have a vision for what you want student to gain from their programme of study.
- Articulate the educational aims clearly.
- Have clearly written and achievable programme learning outcomes.
- Modules must be mapped to programme learning outcomes to demonstrate how these will be achieved.
- Align your learning outcomes with your assessment and teaching activities.
- Map your assessment and feedback strategy across the whole programme.
- Draw from the Education Strategy and external reference points to support the programme design and development
- Embed enhancement and enrichment opportunities into student learning.
- Take a teamwork approach, drawing from the expertise and experience of university colleagues.

The programme team

Thinking about programmes, the connected modules, along with the enhancement and enrichment experiences of students is complex. Programmes require input from a range of colleagues, which includes module teachers; ASQ; Faculty Librarians; Learning Developers, ISS and others. Consulting and drawing from the expertise and experience of colleagues ensures we harness the means to enhance quality, and recognises that excellent teaching requires a holistic approach for an education, which is “beyond the discipline” and transformative.

