

Designing economics modules and programmes

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Designing modules or programmes

Programmes = Degrees

Strategic choice of Department

Typically you have to fit within the Department's decision

Modules = Units

Optional or compulsory?

You may inherit a module or design one from scratch

Designing units

Design problem:

$$\mathcal{L} = \text{Objective} + \lambda \text{ Constraint}$$

Think of some objectives that a module might have (what sort of module?)

➤ Are there any particularly UK objectives?

Think of some constraints that modules typically face (what sort of module?)

➤ Are there any particularly UK constraints?

Recognising constraints on the design of modules or programmes

External constraints

The Quality Assurance Agency

The Competition and Markets Authority

The market

External examiners

Institutional (university) constraints

Corporate themes

Resources

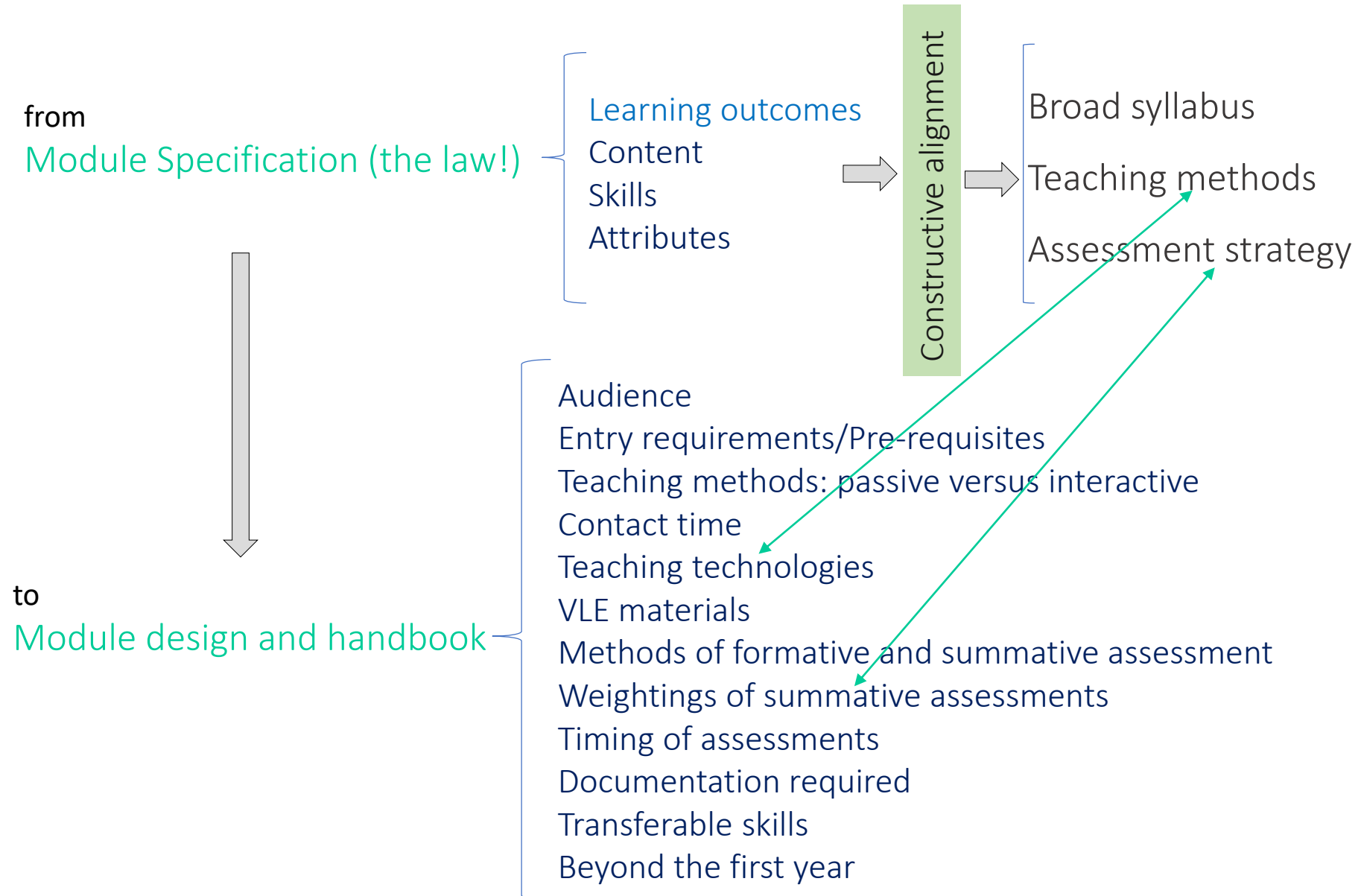
Departmental constraints

Fitting within degree / programme

Student ability

Resources

Designing modules



Backwards planning

What are the aims and objectives of the module?

What are the intended learning outcomes (ILOs)?

How to assess the ILOs?

How will the students learn the ILOs?

How do the tutors (and other resources) facilitate the learning?

Is it possible to build in evaluation of the effectiveness of the module?

Forward planning

What content will be taught?

What skills / ability / knowledge do the students already have?

What resources are available?

How much time (n.b. not resource) is available?

What is possible?

Designing modules: The 'little things'

- Notify the library of references
- Notify the university bookshop of texts
- Handouts (every week, first week, never?)
- Circulate tutorial/seminar work to tutors in advance
- How and when to circulate solutions to tutors/students
- Revision classes
- Room bookings
- Turnitin
- Work samples
- Office hours
- Resources in classrooms
- Contacting students

Departmental constraints (i) - Resources

Students' ability / time is a (limited) resource

Cognitive load (depth v. breadth)

Assessment load (quantity, type)

Coordination of deadlines with other modules

Staff time is a limited resource

Time needed for marking and feedback – possibly most important issue in teaching

Departmental constraints (ii) - Curriculum

Where does this module fit into the big picture?

Modules before, alongside, after
Departments aim for its graduates

Issues

Overlap, repetition
Coverage: is there a balanced diet?
Curriculum (CORE or traditional?)
Consistency (notation, nomenclature)

Module review

Use University requirements constructively

Checklist

Note mistakes and problems (in writing) as they happen.

How do you know what worked?

Talk to tutors and discuss what worked and what needs change.

Is there a problem with another module (diplomatic feedback possible?)

Edmund's perspective

Staff have a tendency to spend too much time:

Writing lecture slides and material

Thinking about content

Talking to (or at) students

Staff have a tendency to spend too little time:

Thinking about delivery

Listening to students

Thinking how to enable students to work on their own