



Module Design Tips

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Terminology

Perhaps a trivial issue, but be aware of terminology! In some Institutions you are asked to design a **module** while in other institutions it might be called a **unit**! Or, similarly, your module is part of a **degree** in one institution or part of a **programme** in another one!

Backward Induction

When reflecting on the design and structure of the module it is helpful to adopt a '**backward planning**' approach. Ask yourself: what do I want the students to learn by the end of the module? What are the module's Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)? Given these ILOs, how should the learning, assessment and resources be organised? Think about the end result and work your way backwards.



Module Specification/Official Documentation

If you are asked to take over and re-design an existing module, it is very likely that the University will hold **official** documentation about the module that specifies key characteristics of the module such as the contact hours, the assessment structure, the broad ILOs and syllabus. In designing the module you will be asked to stick to the information contained in such a documentation.

The 'Little' Things

As a module organiser there are a considerable number of 'small things' you need to be aware of and take care of. These range from informing the library about the core or supplementary textbooks you require for your module to your engagement with the class teachers to decisions concerning the release of lecture notes or solutions to problem sets to students. Try to think ahead and to contemplate all possible eventualities!

Objectives, Constraints, Opportunities

When designing a module think about its main objectives and the constraints as well as the opportunities you face. Are you dealing with a new or an existing module? Is it a core or compulsory or elective module? Is it a pre-requisite for other modules? Is it specific to a particular degree? What are the students' backgrounds? Are there university regulations about contact time, assessment format, feedback etc.? Are the resources you need to run your module available e.g. IT resources, teaching space, technology?

Constructive Alignment

'Constructive Alignment': an obscure terminology that reflects the need to make sure that the design of the learning activities, the assessment, the use of resources are carefully **aligned** to achieve the module's ILOs. For example, if a module's objectives is to develop in students good "economic policy analysis and communication skills", how is the module designed to make sure that by the end of the academic year the student has developed such skills?



Plan Ahead

You might have your own views on how to design the module that might not necessarily be consistent with the approved documentation about that module e.g. the approved assessment structure is different from the one you would consider using. Be aware that to change the approved features of the module, usually requires submitting a request for change in the year before the change will actually take place. So, plan carefully and well ahead of time!

Ask Colleagues

If you are unsure about any aspect of module design, talk to colleagues who are module organisers or, even better, talk to the Director of UG Studies (or equivalent in your School/ Department) who is more likely to know 'the law' and the expectations!

