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Quality Assurance for Reform and Transformation of HEIs in Uzbekistan - QUARTZ

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Ensuring Quality in Higher Education: Admission, monitoring, tutoring and career development

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Strengthening Programme Flexibility & Student Progression

Structuring a Balanced Curriculum

- Core, elective (optional), and facultative modules, as well as programme specialisations for structured yet flexible learning

Diversifying Learning Modes

- Full-time, part-time, blended, and to enhance accessibility
- Work-based learning to integrate professional experience into academic qualifications

Ensuring Seamless Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer

- Formal Learning
- Non-formal Learning
- Informal Learning



Core, Elective, and Optional Components. Programme Pathways

Core Modules

- Essential for foundational and discipline-specific learning.

Electives (Optional Modules)

- Allow students to specialise in areas of interest.

Facultative Modules

- Support interdisciplinary learning and skill diversification (non-compulsory, supplementary learning, no direct impact on degree completion).

Programme Specialisations (Pathways)

- Allow students to choose a specialisation that aligns with career goals, e.g., MBA (Finance) or MBA (Sport Management), can be organised by pairing elective modules to lead to specialisation.



Multiple Study Modes for Accessibility and Inclusion

Full-time & Part-time

- Offers flexibility based on student needs and availability.

Blended & Online Learning

- Incorporates digital tools for hybrid education.

Work-Based Learning

- Internships, apprenticeships, that are incorporated as credit-bearing modules.



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Definition & Purpose

- **Evidence-based** integration of previously acquired **knowledge, skills, and experience** into formal education.
- “A formal acknowledgement by a competent authority of the value of a foreign educational qualification with a view to access to educational and/or employment activities.” (Lisbon Recognition Convention retrieved from https://ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/Lisbon_Recognition_Convention/04/5/Lisbon_Recognition_Convention_579045.pdf)

Impact

- Enhances **Lifelong learning** and career mobility.
- Supports **flexible educational pathways**.
- Promotes **diversity and inclusivity** in higher education.

Types

- **Formal** – accredited education and qualifications.
- **Non-Formal** – workplace training, professional certifications.
- **Informal** – Self-directed learning, work/life experience.



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer cont.

Recognition of Formal Learning

- Qualifications or periods of study for student transfer (advanced entry, credit exemption)
- Student mobility – Erasmus+ outgoing student mobility for studies or placement (including micro credentials), bilateral agreements between HEIs for Double or Joint Degree Programmes, University Alliances.

Recognition of Experiential Learning (RPEL)

- Prior learning gained through
 - work, voluntary activities or other life experiences acquired outside of formal higher education or training systems.
 - non-accredited training courses.
- Could be evidenced through work products (reports, minutes, emails etc.), testimonies, projects, professional publications, learning logs/reflective accounts, videos, audio.
- Involves an assessment process on the part of academic staff.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer: APPLICATION

- **Define Clear Parameters** – Establish **acceptable types, limits, and staff/faculty responsibilities** for RPL credit transfer.
- **Integrate into Quality Assurance Systems (QA)** – Embed RPL **criteria and assessment methods** within institutional QA frameworks, e.g., ECTS Guide, programme specifications, internal regulations and documentation for recognition.
- **Ensure Transparency** – Make RPL policies **publicly accessible** for current and prospective students, including transfer and mobility students.

Programme Specification and Formal Approval

The approval and updating of the Programme specification should be integrated into the internal QA provisions.

Core elements of Programme Specification:

- General Information
 - Teaching/Awarding Institution
 - Final Award and Programme Title
 - Programme Director (Head of Department)
 - Mode of Study, Normal Duration, and Period of Candidature, Language of study
 - Subject Benchmark Statements, Professional Bodies Accreditations
 - Date of Production



Programme Specification cont.

- Admission criteria
- Aims of the programme – broad and general, defining overall purpose
- Qualification description – aligned with HEI strategic goals and NQF
- Learning outcomes
- Credits and award requirements
- Programme structure and features, curriculum units (modules)
- Teaching, learning and assessment methods
- Module delivery and assessment timetable (generic)
- Student commitments
- Ethics and guidance on unfair practices in student work
- Progression, employment and transfer opportunities
- Academic support



Ensuring a Structured Student Lifecycle (SSL)

Institutions must apply consistent, transparent, and published regulations across all stages of the student journey, including cover **admission, recognition of prior learning, academic progression, and final certification.**

Why It Matters?

- Supports student success and institutional integrity.
- Ensures fair access, mobility, and qualification recognition across institutions and countries.
- Aligns with international agreements (e.g., Lisbon Recognition Convention) for coherent recognition policies.

SSL: Admission - Fair & Transparent Access

Transparent Admission & Entry Policies

- Admission criteria should be clear, publicly available, and consistently applied.
- Equal access for all applicants to maintain fairness and institutional credibility.
- Accommodation to diverse application needs, including support for international applicants, applicants with disabilities, transfer students, students applying with RPL.
- Proper communication channels with applicants and prospective students



SSL: Student Induction & Orientation

Pre-Arrival Support *(Before the Start of the Semester)*

Welcome Week Activities *(First Week of Semester)*

Academic Orientation *(First Week of Semester)*

Student Wellbeing & Support *(First Week of Semester)*

Ongoing Induction Support *(Throughout the First Semester)*

- Access to online orientation materials (videos, handbooks, FAQs).
- Virtual Q&A sessions with faculty and student mentors.
- Completion of introductory academic skills modules.

- University Introduction: Overview of mission, values, and academic culture.
- Campus & Facilities Tour: Library, IT services, student support centres, career offices.
- Meet Your Faculty: Introduction to department heads, tutors, and key academic staff.
- Social Integration: Ice-breaking activities, student clubs, networking events.

- Understanding Programme Structure: Modules, credits, assessments, and progression pathways.
- Academic Integrity & Expectations: Plagiarism policies, research ethics, referencing guidelines.
- Learning Support Services: Study skills workshops, tutoring, language support.

- Overview of counselling services.
- Guidance on financial aid, housing, and student welfare programmes.
- Safety briefing and emergency contact procedures.
- Student Career Services for internship and placements.
- Erasmus+ mobility opportunities.

- Regular check-ins with academic advisors or personal tutors.
- Peer mentoring programmes for continued support.
- Mid-semester review session to address challenges and feedback.



SSL: Monitoring Student Progression

Institutions should implement robust mechanisms to monitor and support student progress.

Regular Monitoring and Reporting

- Early Risk Identification: Weekly or monthly attendance tracking to detect at-risk students.
- Performance Reviews: Continuous academic evaluations (e.g., mid-term progress reports, formative assessments).
- Engagement Analytics: Tracking student participation in online platforms, discussion forums, and coursework.

Proactive Support Mechanisms

- Advisory meetings: One-on-one or group mentoring sessions every month with academic advisors.
- Data-driven alerts: Systems that flag at-risk students (declining grades, low attendance, disengagement).
- Student feedback surveys: Regular check-ins on learning experience, workload, and support needs.

Institutional Interventions

- Flexible learning pathways: Alternative routes for students requiring extra academic support.
- Faculty collaboration: Coordinated efforts between academic staff, student affairs, and career services to enhance support systems.



SSL: Facilitating Mobility & Recognition

- Recognition of qualifications and learning periods is key to student mobility.
- Ensures a coherent recognition in cooperation with national and international QA agencies (EU context ENIC/NARIC centres), and international partners.



ENIC-NARIC NETWORKS

ENIC (European Network of Information Centres)

NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the EU)

What they do: https://www.enic-naric.net	Key Functions	Who can use ENIC/NARIC Services
Oversee and facilitate fair, consistent and transparent recognition of academic qualifications across countries	Recognition of Foreign Qualifications operating under the principles of the <i>Lisbon Recognition Convention</i>	Students seeking degree recognition abroad.
	Support for Academic Mobility & Student Transfers	Universities evaluating international student applications.
	Cooperation with Governments & Universities	Government agencies ensuring compliance with education agreements.
		Employers verifying foreign academic credentials.



SSL: Certification & Graduation

Ensuring Qualification Transparency and Recognition Beyond Graduation

Upon graduation, students must receive clear, standardised documentation that verifies their qualifications:

- Degree Award (Diploma)
- Certificate of Completion
- Diploma Supplement (DS)*

The graduation documents should provide detailed information about the qualification, including:

- Learning outcomes achieved
- Qualification level and academic content
- Status of the awarded degree within the national and international education system (including referencing in DS to International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)**)

*Detailed information and a template for a *European Diploma Supplement* can be found on the EUROPASS website:

***ISCED 2011* and *ISCED Fields of Education and Training 2013* details also available at [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=International_Standard_Classification_of_Education_\(ISCED\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=International_Standard_Classification_of_Education_(ISCED))



SSL: Transparency of Regulations

HEIs should published their regulations pertinent to all phases of the Student Lifecycle:

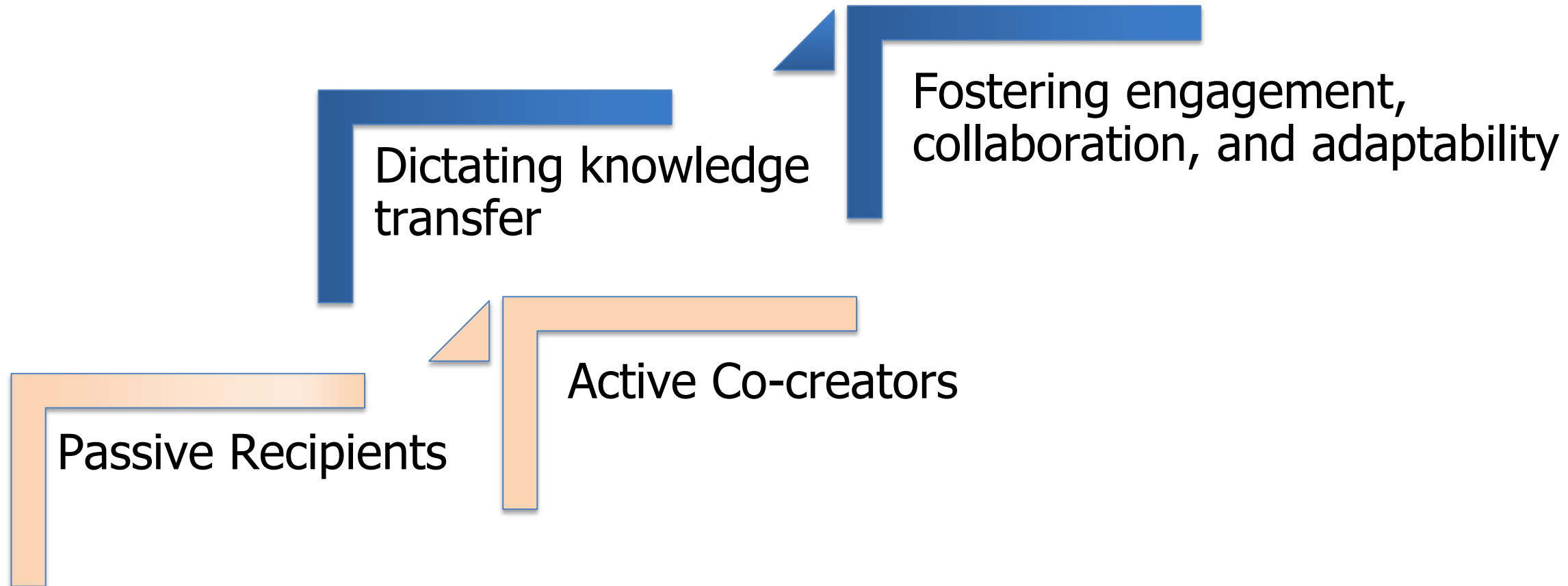
- on the University website
- in the Programme Handbooks

Essential Information should include:

- RPL Regulations
- Student Support Services
- Appeals, Complaints and Academic Regulations
- Induction
- Fees, scholarships, and student loans (if applicable)
- Accommodation
- Learning Centre Services
- Student Representatives, Student Union, Student Charter
- Progression and Transfer Opportunities
- Health and Safety

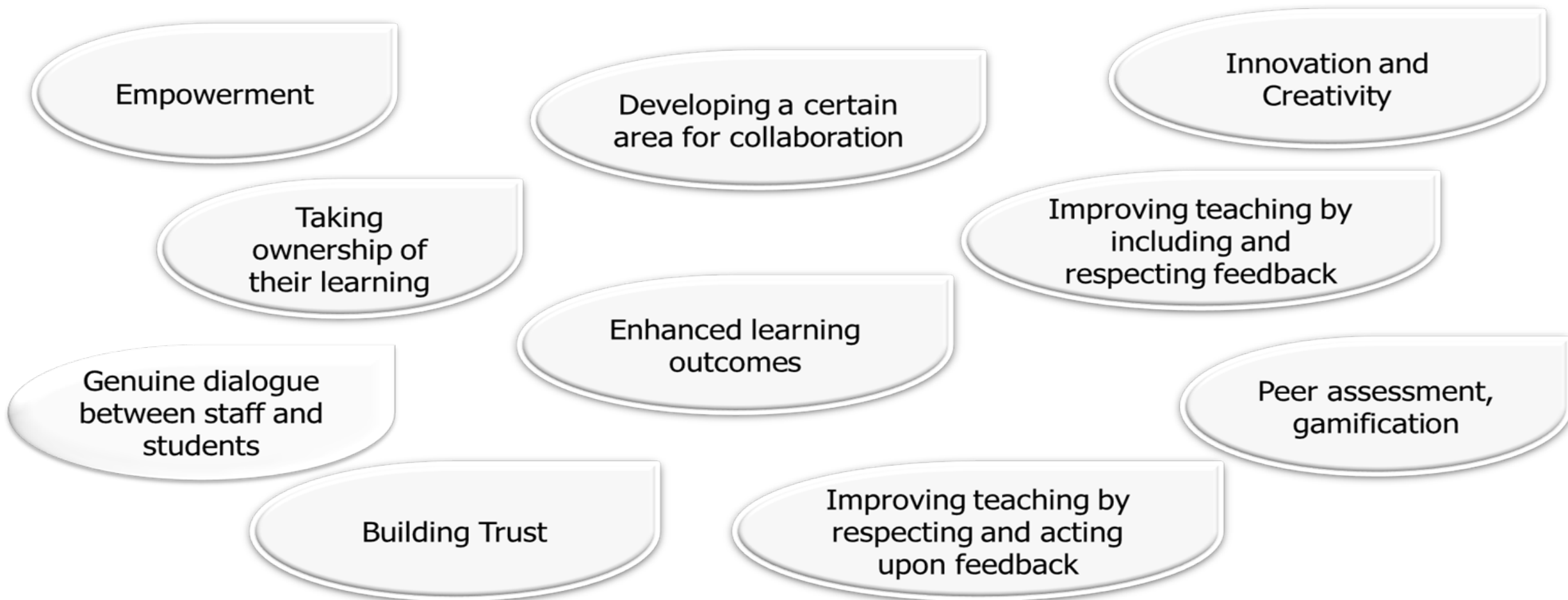


Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment



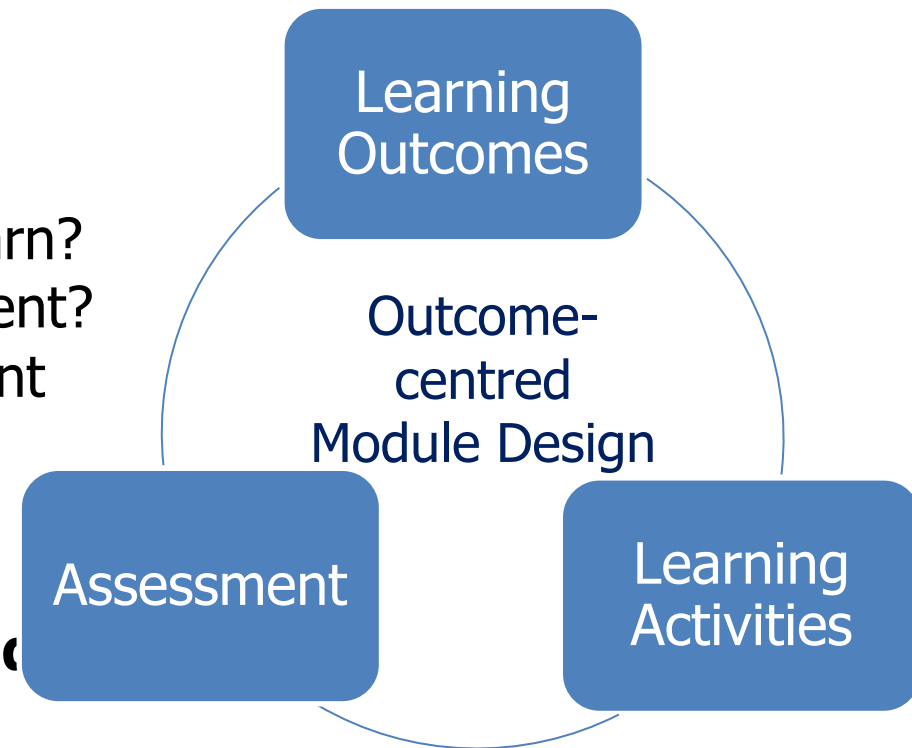


Student Involvement, Engagement, Partnership and Co-creation



Constructive Alignment. Outcome-centred Module Design

- What are the specific **learning outcomes** students should achieve?
- How can these outcomes be clearly **communicated** to students?
- What are the **core concepts and skills** students need to learn?
- What is the **most logical sequence** for presenting this content?
- What **assessment strategies** will accurately measure student attainment of the outcomes?
- How does the module align with **accreditation and institutional requirements**?
- How can we ensure that all components work **cohesively and sustainably** to support student success?



Expanding to a Student-centred Approach

- What do students **already know**, and how does this shape their engagement?
- How **do students best learn**, considering diverse backgrounds and different styles of learning?
- What **active learning strategies** will deepen understanding?
- How can **assessments foster engagement** and critical thinking?
- How can students **take ownership of their learning**?
- What opportunities allow students to **apply knowledge in real-world contexts**?
- How can **feedback enhance** learning and reflection?



Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment (SLTA): Key Principles

Flexibility & Inclusion

- Addresses diverse student needs with adaptable learning paths.

Varied Teaching Approaches

- Uses multiple delivery strategies and , including online, blended, and experiential learning.

Autonomy & Responsibility

- Encourages students to take charge of their own learning with teacher guidance.

Respect & Support

- Fosters a strong learner-teacher relationship.

Student Feedback for Continuous Improvement

- Regular opportunities for students to provide feedback on teaching methods, assessments, and module structure.



SLTA: Adaptable Learning Paths: from foundational instruction to hands-on applications and self-directed learning.

Foundational Learning: Lectures & Directed Study

- **Formal Lectures:** Provide a structured overview of core subject material, establishing a **knowledge foundation**.
- **Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs):** Platforms (e.g., Moodle) **extend learning beyond the classroom** with recorded lectures, resources, and supplementary materials.
- **Directed Reading:** Reinforces subject knowledge with curated academic resources.

Interactive & Collaborative Learning

- **Tutorials:** Clarify misconceptions, reinforce lecture content, and encourage peer discussions.
- **Case Studies:** Engage students in **real-world problem-solving**, requiring critical analysis and research.
- **Problem-Based Learning (PBL):** Encourages self-directed learning, teamwork, and practical application of knowledge.
- **Seminars:** Develop students' **presentation, communication, and problem-solving** skills through discussion-based learning.

Practical & Applied Learning

- **Practical Workshops:** Offer **hands-on experience**, helping students refine their skills with structured academic support.
- **Industry Experts & Guest Lectures:** Bridge academic learning with **real-world industry practices**.
- **Simulations & Lab Work:** Provide experiential learning through **virtual or in-person lab settings, technical exercises, and scenario-based applications**.
- **Fieldwork:** Engages students in applying theoretical knowledge in **authentic real-world settings**.

Self-Paced & Digital Learning

- **Online Discussion Forums & Digital Tools:** Facilitate **collaborative learning and peer interaction** in a flexible, accessible format.
- **Self-Paced Project-Based Learning:** Encourages **independent application of skills**, allowing students to **progress at their own pace** while meeting structured milestones.



SLTA Example: Group Tasks

Purpose & Benefits	Strategies to Ensure Fair Participation
Enhances Collaboration: Encourages teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. Develops Critical Thinking: Promotes peer learning and diverse perspectives. Prepares for Real-World Challenges: Simulates workplace dynamics and cooperative projects.	Clear Roles & Responsibilities: Assign defined tasks to each member to ensure accountability. Regular Progress Check-Ins: Schedule meetings or instructor check-ins to monitor engagement. Weighted Contribution Grading: Allocate grades based on individual efforts alongside group outcomes. Use of Collaboration Tools: Encourage shared workspaces (e.g., Google Docs) for transparency. Peer & Self-Assessment: Implement peer evaluations or group reflective reports to track contributions and prevent freeriding.



SLTA Example: Flipped Teaching and Student-Led Workshops

Aspect	Flipped Teaching	<u>Student-Led Workshops</u>
Pre-Class Preparation	Students review materials before class	Students research and prepare materials for presentation
In-Class Role	Students apply knowledge through guided activities	Students take charge of teaching and discussion
Instructor's Role	Facilitator, guiding discussions	Supportive mentor, providing feedback
Main Focus	Application and problem-solving	Leadership, facilitation, and knowledge sharing

SLTA Example: Peer-to-Peer Assessment

Peer assessment can be used as a structured evaluation method where students **review and provide feedback** on each other's work based on **predefined criteria**.

Benefits:

For Students: Enhances **critical thinking, self-reflection, and evaluative skills** while promoting **active engagement** in learning.

For the Institution: Encourages **student autonomy, collaborative learning, and accountability** in coursework.

For Academic Development: Reinforces **constructive feedback skills** and prepares students for **teamwork and evaluation processes** in professional settings.



SLTA Example: Encouraging Cross-Cultural Understanding

- Promotes cultural awareness and reduces stereotypes through collaborative learning.
- Uses team-based projects, discussions, and case studies to explore cultural perspectives.
- Encourages critical reflection and problem-solving in diverse contexts.

Example



SLTA Example: Engaging In-Class Activities Assessment to Encourage Active Participation

Grade	Criteria for evaluating student in-class performance	
0	✓	Absent
1 - 2	✓	Present, not participating
	✓	Attempts at responding to a question but does not demonstrate adequate knowledge
	✓	Hardly ever gets involved in class discussion and activities
3 - 5	✓	Shows only basic preparation
	✓	No sufficient evidence of facts interpretation or analysis
	✓	Very little contribution to discussion with a little evidence of factual knowledge and understanding
6 - 8	✓	Well prepared
	✓	Interpretations of information are based on analysis of facts, determining relationships between constituent parts
	✓	Contributes frequently to discussion, engages in arguments by discussing opposing ideas
9 - 10	✓	Demonstrates excellent performance, relating interpretations to course material
	✓	Evaluates information intelligibly, based on criteria and standards - coming to convincing conclusions which takes the discussion further
	✓	Contributes significantly to the cooperative argument-building, demonstrates very active involvement and creative approach



SSLTA Example: Building Skills Through Small Tasks

Why it Matters

- Helps students develop skills gradually.
- Encourages continuous learning and engagement.
- Provides both formative feedback and final assessment.

How It Works

- Portfolio Approach: Students complete small tasks that add up over time.
- Step-by-Step Learning: Each task builds on previous ones.
- Balanced Assessment: Mix of ongoing feedback and final evaluation.

Benefits

- Tracks progress effectively.
- Encourages reflection and deeper learning.
- Reduces stress from one-time exams.



SSLTA: Ensure Consistent, Fair, Transparent, and Relevant Assessment

Key Principles

Fairness & Consistency: Assessments are applied equally to all students, following established procedures.

Transparency: Assessment criteria, marking schemes, and methods are published and explained in advance.

Relevance: Assessment aligns with **module level, cognitive demand, and university marking criteria.**

Quality Assurance: Ensures assessments support **student progression and future careers.**



SSLTA: Incorporate Diagnostic, Formative, and Summative Assessment

1. Diagnostic Assessment

- **Purpose:** Identifies prior knowledge, strengths, and areas for improvement.
- **Examples:** Pre-course quizzes, skills audits, self-assessments.

2. Formative Assessment

- **Purpose:** Provides feedback during learning to guide improvement.
- **Examples:** Draft submissions, peer reviews, in-class exercises.

3. Summative Assessment

- **Purpose:** Evaluates the achieved learning outcomes.
- **Examples:** Final exams and coursework, major projects, dissertations.



SSLTA: Best Practices for Effective Assessment

Clear & Aligned Criteria

- **Assessment tasks should reflect learning outcomes and be appropriate for the level of study. Marking criteria must align with university and departmental standards.**

Robust Quality Assurance

- **Multiple Examiners:** Where possible, assessments should be reviewed by more than one examiner.
- Training for Assessors:** Faculty should receive support in developing fair and effective assessment methods.
- Consideration for Mitigating Circumstances:** Policies should account for special student needs.

Transparent Feedback & Appeals Process

- **Feedback:** Regular, structured feedback linked to academic progress.
- **Communication:** How student requests and complaints have been actioned.
- Appeals Mechanism:** A clear process for students to contest grades in a structured manner.



SSLTA: Ensuring Transparency – Making Assessment Information Available

Publishing Assessment Guidelines

- Provide students **with clear assessment criteria** and expectations.
- **Share** marking rubrics, deadlines, and weightings in advance.

Access to Feedback & Appeals

- Outline how students will **receive feedback** and opportunities for improvement.
- Ensure a structured **grade appeal process** is available.

Clear Communication Channels

- Use **learning management systems** to publish assessment details.
- Hold **Q&A sessions** to clarify expectations and procedures.

SSLTA: Monitoring and Enhancement

Key Evaluation Methods

Student Feedback: Collected through module evaluations, course rep discussions, and surveys.

Lecturer Self-Evaluation: Reflection on teaching effectiveness, student participation, and assessment strategies.

Performance Metrics: Analysing student performance data, attendance rates, and engagement levels.

Ongoing Curriculum Enhancement: Adjustments based on **learning outcomes, student needs, and teaching innovations.**

Example



Sustaining Quality: Assurance and Continuous Improvement





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Thank you for your attention!

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