A Simple Guide to Good Programme Design

Part 1: Strategic Approval / Programme Proposal
The following guidance is an overview of the key steps in the process of successfully achieving new programme approval. Validation is key to ensuring consistency of provision, expectation, and student experience. New programme ideas **should always be discussed** with your Director of Teaching and Learning and your Head of School. New programmes often require some additional resources, either staff or facilities or both, so it is helpful from the outset to get agreement from your Head of School.

The following information should help you to develop your ideas.

Step 1a: The new idea (the new programme) – Key questions to consider. It is often helpful to consider and discuss these questions with your colleagues especially the prospective programme team.

1.1   Is it clear who is leading the development of the programme? Is it you?

1.2   What makes the proposed programme a good idea? How does it align with the agreed strategic objectives of the School and University? Think about employability, sustainability and Welsh Medium as well as the University's [Teaching and Learning Strategy](#).

1.3   Are there any external drivers to which the school is responding e.g., regional/national/international industrial/commercial/societal demand, health/wellbeing providers etc?

1.4   Is the programme UG or PG, full time and/or part-time, could it be a degree apprenticeship (is there a national standard currently established?)?

1.5   What is the mode of delivery and can you be flexible?

1.6   Could students articulate onto the programme from regional FE?

1.7   Can the programme gain professional accreditation, if so from who and what are the key steps in the process? Does the accreditation have strict course content requirements? If so, make sure these are an integral part of the programme evolution and design. Consider employment routes and links to employer needs.

1.8   What opportunities are there for providing students with industrial/commercial placements? Is there an option of working with a third-party provider to ensure all students who would like to undertake a placement (either domestically or internationally) are able to do so? [Work placements](#) make a significant difference in helping students into permanent employment.

1.9   Can the programme be offered in Welsh?

1.10   Is the proposed programme suitable for consideration for Transnational Education (TNE) or collaborative provision via franchise or as a basis for validation.

This portion of work should take approximately 4 weeks to complete and should be a series of concise answers to the questions asked.

Step 1b – Market Appraisal
This activity is to be supported centrally. Key questions to consider include, what is the likely demand for the programme? Do any other Universities offer the same or similar programmes? Does the university already teach a similar programme? How many students do they recruit annually? Is there an opportunity to recruit international students? How many students would you estimate the programme will enrol at steady state e.g., after 5 years? Do we have any competitors – if so, to what extent are they a potential impediment?

A market appraisal should take no more than 4 to 6 weeks and should provide valuable insight into the appeal and viability of the proposed programme.

Step 2 – Degree Structure and Additional Work
How much of the programme requires new modules? Who should write them? Could you borrow from other schools? Do you have the expertise and resource? School approval will also need your answers to the questions raised in step 1.

Having completed steps 1 and 2 you should now be able to produce your programme proposal (Worktribe guidance is available on the Bangor University website).

Step 3 – Preparing the Programme Approval Documentation

3.1   Always utilise existing information where available (there is no need to re-invent the wheel) e.g. information relating to General Regulations for All Students

3.2   Use module templates to complete new module proposals. These can be found on the Bangor University website.

They will help with producing a consistent format. Be clear about meeting the needs of professional body requirements. Plan your programme structure to consider increasing academic complexity as students progress within the programme from year 1 to years 3/4.

3.3   Staffing (provide CVs to show staff capability and experience).

3.4   Which other resources e.g. bursaries, scholarships, travel etc. in case of collaborative provision, may be required to successfully deliver the proposed programme e.g., IT requirements, teaching space (classroom, lecture theatre, lab etc) what library provision is required? Is there a need to make new purchases of equipment, if so, costs (to include installation) should be provided and where possible agreed in principle.

3.5   When designing your programme, think about how to use and diversify assessment   in innovative ways, especially as a key driver to achieve learning. Be aware of the
        University's assessment tariff i.e., relate the amount of assessment to the number of
        credits of a given module.

- https://www.bangor.ac.uk/quality/course/documents/BUAssessmentFrameworkOct2018.pdf

3.6   Research informed teaching. How will the school's research programmes inform the
        programme? Research input can often make a programme distinctive and attractive   to would-be students. It is good practice for students to engage in research,   especially at Levels 6 and 7.

3.7   Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)
        It is important that when developing a new programme, reference is made to the key
        principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion. The following links will help with formulating
        your EDI statement:

- https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/topics/equality-diversity-and-inclusion
- https://www.bangor.ac.uk/equality-diversity-and-inclusion

Producing the validation proposal via Worktribe is the largest section of work in achieving the validation of a new programme. Ask for examples of other well prepared and commended programme proposals which have been approved. **Emulate good practice**. Ask for feedback on your proposal. **Break down the preparation into sections** and always use existing generic information e.g., University regulations. Don't forget to also seek advice from professional bodies where relevant. They are often helpful and are willing to provide help. Working with professional bodies from the outset will make any subsequent accreditation from that body much more straightforward.

You should allow 4 to 6 months to develop your programme proposal.

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August 2023