

Undergraduate Curriculum Design Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) The University will provide a coherent framework including principles, policies and procedures to guide staff in the design of undergraduate curriculum. Desired outcomes are to provide an enriching, effective learning experience for students and a rewarding teaching experience for staff.

(2) The primary purpose is to provide guiding principles to ensure that the University's undergraduate courses and subjects are designed to be effective in promoting high quality, meaningful, and long-lasting learning, particularly in relation to University/College Graduate Capabilities.

(3) Further, to ensure that undergraduate courses and subjects are designed to be efficient to teach and assess, financially and administratively sustainable, relevant to employers and the community, and attractive to potential students.

(4) To ensure consistency and equivalence of learning outcomes across all teaching locations, there will be a single Course Co-ordinator for any award of the University. The College may wish to appoint Course Instance Co-ordinators at different locations and Course Teaching teams, but the final responsibility for decisions regarding the course rest with the Course Co-ordinator in consultation with the relevant Head(s) of School.

Section 2 - Scope

(5) Applies to:

- a. All undergraduate courses
- b. All Colleges
- c. All campuses

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(6) All La Trobe University's undergraduate courses, and their constituent subjects, will be designed or redesigned - and reviewed and evaluated against - curriculum design criteria based on relevant higher education research and the best available market research.

(7) The University aims to ensure the constructive alignment of teaching and learning activities, learning resources and support, assessment strategies, and feedback mechanisms in order to support student achievement of University, College and course intended learning outcomes to clear and appropriate standards.

(8) In order to be approved, every La Trobe course, and its constituent subjects, must demonstrate that it has been designed or redesigned to:

- a. Identify the intended learning outcomes and attributes which distinguish it from other, potentially similar undergraduate courses offered by La Trobe and by relevant external competitors;
- b. Provide an educationally sound rationale for the relevance, breadth, depth, sequence, and balance of intended learning outcomes and course content;
- c. Specify all course intended learning outcomes (CILOs) and the agreed standards to which they are to be demonstrated at Cornerstone, Mid-point and Capstone levels;
- d. Identify types and levels of prior skills and knowledge required and/or expected at entry, methods for evaluating the academic preparation of commencing students and, if relevant, opportunities for prospective and commencing students to improve their preparation for success in the course;
- e. Incorporate Cornerstone, Mid-point and Capstone subjects in all bachelor-level courses in order to ensure that, at minimum, all subject intended learning outcomes (SILOs) are explicitly taught and evaluated – and that students are provided with relevant learning activities and feedback – through those subjects;
- f. Specify the points throughout the course at which other relevant CILOs will be introduced, taught, developed, and evaluated – and when and where students will be provided with feedback needed to improve their learning and performance in relation to those outcomes;
- g. Provide opportunities for students to complete subjects that address The Essentials;
- h. Provide a rationale for the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the main teaching, assessment, feedback and academic support strategies, approaches and/or technologies to be used;
- i. Ensure that all enrolled students, regardless of location, have access to equivalent opportunities to learn and succeed – including access to the provision of equivalent teaching, assessment, feedback, course materials, and academic support services; and,
- j. Ensure that all materials, media, technologies and resources required for successful learning in and completion of the course are available in formats accessible to all enrolled students, including those with disabilities.

(9) Reviews of the academic merit of courses are also conducted against these guiding criteria.

Section 4 - Procedure

(10) All Bachelor-level courses will embed intended learning outcomes and standards in order to provide all students with the best possible opportunity to achieve the four common La Trobe University Graduate Capabilities. In order to be meaningful, the four La Trobe University Graduate Capabilities will be defined in discipline-specific terms. Evaluation of these four Graduate Capabilities will take place, at minimum, at three points/subjects in the course curriculum – Cornerstone, Mid-point and Capstone. At each of these three points, the level of each student's achievement of the agreed college standard for each of the four core GCs will be evaluated. The outcome of the evaluation of each student's achievement of the GC at each point will be recorded as "Standard Not Met", "Standard Met", or "Standard Exceeded".

(11) The four common Graduate Capabilities are consonant with the three La Trobe Essentials: Global Citizenship, Innovation and Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Thinking, which all undergraduate students will experience to foster the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to become future ready.

(12) Curriculum design will ensure intended learning outcomes (ILOs), teaching and learning activities, assessments and learning resources are aligned to promote high quality student learning and academic success.

(13) Curriculum design will also promote the most efficient use of staff and student time and resources. Curriculum design will be learning-centred, research and evidence-based, as well as equitable, efficient, effective, and sustainable.

Course Lifecycle

(14) The Course Lifecycle consists of design, approval, delivery, review, revision, suspension and closure of courses. The procedures herein relate to the design phase.

Governance

(15) The Education Committee is responsible, overall, for monitoring the implementation of University academic policies and procedures related to curriculum, teaching and learning.

(16) The Coursework Committee considers and advises Academic Board, on all new and revised course proposals; course suspensions or closures; course review criteria and monitoring; course and subject quality; policy and procedures related to the course and subject lifecycle and their compliance.

Legislation

(17) All undergraduate course proposals are required to meet relevant legislation including the [Higher Education Support Act \(HESA\)](#), [Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\)](#) and the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act \(ESOS\)](#).

(18) New undergraduate course proposals and revised courses are to comply with the policies listed in Associated Documents as well as relevant policies subsequently approved.

Educational Rationale

(19) All undergraduate course proposals will provide an educationally sound rationale for the relevance, breadth, depth, sequence and balance of the intended learning outcomes, and the topics, concepts and skills which comprise the course content.

(20) Further, each course proposal should identify the unique attributes and outcomes – including majors, minors, pathways to further study and career options open to students on course completion – which distinguish it from other La Trobe undergraduate courses.

Course Design Requisites

(21) All Bachelor-level courses will:

- a. Be able to be categorised as Generalist, Specialist or Professional courses;
- b. Identify and map the three points/subjects in the course curriculum – Cornerstone, Mid-point and Capstone – at which the level of each student’s achievement of the agreed College standard for each GC will be evaluated and that outcome recorded as “Standard Not Met,” Standard Met,” or Standard Exceeded” in the Learning Management System (LMS);
- c. Embed Cornerstone evaluation(s) in the first year of the course to determine student achievement relative to the agreed College standard for each GC at Cornerstone level and, subsequently, to provide formative feedback, opportunities for further learning and development and for appropriate academic support;
- d. Embed Mid-point evaluation(s) approximately halfway through the course – in terms of credit points required for the course and typically achieved by students – to determine student achievement relative to the agreed College standard for each GC at Mid-point level and, subsequently, to provide formative feedback, opportunities for further learning and development and for appropriate academic support;
- e. Embed Capstone evaluation(s) in the final year of the course to determine student achievement relative to the agreed College standard for each GC at Capstone level and, subsequently, to provide summative feedback to students;

- f. Provide opportunities, either in core subjects or through electives, for students to complete subjects which address The Essentials;
- g. Incorporate a learning component that informs all students new to La Trobe of the University's expectations and policies regarding academic integrity (plagiarism; referencing etc);
- h. Incorporate an agreed learning component that builds students' cultural literacy;
- i. Incorporate one Major consisting of 120 credit points;
- j. Where the course is offered in Victoria to domestic and international students, require that no more than 25% of the total course offering be provided solely via by distance and/or online learning; and
- k. Where the course is offered in Victoria to domestic and international students require that not all distance and/or online learning options be offered solely in a single semester of the course.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), Graduate Capabilities (GCs) and Standards

(22) All Bachelor-level courses will develop, embed and communicate:

- a. All Course-level Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs), including the subset of CILOs which concern Graduate Capabilities;
- b. All Subject-level Intended Learning Outcomes (SILOs) required to provide students throughout the course with the instruction, assessment, feedback, and academic support required to develop appropriate levels of achievement in relation to the Graduate Capabilities; and,
- c. Clear agreed standards for the evaluation of student achievement of the GCs at designated Cornerstone, Mid-point and Capstone, at a minimum.

Teaching and Learning Resources

(23) All undergraduate subjects will have an online presence and utilise a common LMS Subject Template to which College and subject specific materials can be added, but within which common University-wide materials and information are pre-populated (e.g. policies, scholarly knowledge resources etc).

(24) Students may be given access to a Personal Learning System (PLS), such as an e-Portfolio, in courses which both require e-Portfolio use and also provide support to students in its use.

(25) Corresponding with the [Course Design Guidelines - Subject Minimum Online Requirements](#), Subject Learning Guides for students will, as a minimum, outline:

- a. Subject attributes;
- b. Subject offer details;
- c. Subject description;
- d. Subject intended learning outcomes;
- e. Learning activity summary;
- f. Assessment and feedback summary;
- g. Learning resources; and,
- h. Policy, procedure and guidelines.

(26) Subject Co-ordinators are also encouraged to include a 'strategies for success' section that provides students with a variety of methods and resources that can assist them in passing the subject.

Assessment and Feedback Design

(27) All Bachelor-level courses will:

- a. Ensure all assessment is criterion-referenced; not norm-referenced.
- b. Allocate each student an overall grade/mark for each subject assessment item and, when the evaluation of GCs is embedded in subject assessment activities, also allocate each student an outcome as well – i.e., Standard Not Met, Standard Met, Standard Exceeded – indicating the level of student achievement for the relevant GCs.
- c. Embed Cornerstone, Mid-point and Capstone evaluations in the course to determine student achievement relative to the agreed College standard for each GC at each level and provide feedback to students on their achievements.
- d. Incorporate both formative and summative assessment within all subjects.
- e. To avoid double-marking when the evaluation of GCs is embedded in subject assessment activities, an assessment rubric(s) or grading grid will be developed for the relevant assessment activity(ies) to allow for concurrent assessment of subject content and evaluation of the level of student achievement against the set of GC standard(s).

Graduate Opportunities

(28) Course proposals will provide an overview of the course structure specifying:

- a. Career pathways available to students upon graduation, both locally and internationally, and,
- b. Postgraduate study options; particularly those available at La Trobe University.

Accessibility and Inclusive Curriculum

(29) The design of courses will ensure that all enrolled students, regardless of location, have access to equivalent opportunities to learn and succeed – including provision of relevant teaching and learning activities, assessment, feedback, learning resources, and academic support services

(30) In developing subject learning resources, subject designers will ensure that resources are made available in accessible formats in a timely manner and any conversion process complies with copyright requirements.

Course Entry Requirements and Conditions

(31) English language entry requirements should be based on at least a minimum standard required for successful study.

(32) Year 12 prerequisites should be based on the required minimum level of achievement in the relevant prerequisite discipline(s) required to commence the course.

(33) Course proposals and course advertising will explicitly state the type and level of skills and access (e.g. computer skills; broadband) required to undertake the learning activities in the course.

Pathways

(34) Course designers should ensure multiple entry pathways into the course to provide access to:

- a. Students who have successfully completed Year 12 or equivalent;
- b. Mature aged/return to study applicants; and
- c. Applicants who do not meet Year 12 equivalence.

Consultation During Course Design

(35) Subject designers must discuss their requirements with the Library and La Trobe Learning and Teaching curriculum developers and educational designers during the design phase to ensure the subject is consistent with the

University's policies and strategies.

(36) Where a course or a subject is to be delivered by a third-party provider engaged by the University, subject designers will consult and work with personnel from third-party providers to ensure subjects can be delivered in different modes.

(37) The Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) should be consulted about ESOS and CRICOS compliance in relation to any course which may be offered to international students.

(38) The Marketing & Engagement Division may be able to assist with primary research to test the proposed course design. Where primary market research is required there will be resource implications for the College.

Course Advisory Committees

(39) The creation of Course Advisory Committees – which include academic and professional staff, practitioners, employers, students and recent graduates – is mandated by La Trobe University. Course Advisory Committees should be consulted during the design phase.

Infrastructure

(40) Prior to submitting proposals for new or substantially revised courses and subjects, course/subject designers must establish whether the University has the infrastructure (e.g large teaching spaces; technology requirements) in place to allow that course or subject to be taught.

Section 5 - Definitions

- a. Capstone Subject: Any subject teaching, evaluating and providing feedback that consolidates learning from across the course, and evaluates the level of student achievement towards achieving the standard set for Capstone.
- b. Cornerstone Subject: Any subject teaching, evaluating and providing feedback specifically designed to provide commencing students with a firm grounding in the core threshold knowledge and skills required to learn successfully in more advanced subjects, and evaluates the level of student achievement towards achieving the standard set for Cornerstone.
- c. Course: A program of study leading to one or more qualifications and in which a student may study one or more Majors.
- d. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs): Brief statements defining what students are expected to demonstrate they know and can do by the end of a course.
- e. Criterion-referenced assessment: Student's work is assessed with reference to written criteria derived from explicit learning outcomes
- f. Formative Assessment/Evaluation: Processes aimed at monitoring student progress against standards and providing them with feedback comparing their progress to the standards in order to help students improve their learning and achievement.
- g. Graduate Capabilities (GC): High level learning outcomes that are described in discipline-specific terms.
- h. Graduate Capability Standard: Component criteria against which a student's achievement of a GC is evaluated.
- i. Intended Learning Outcome (ILO): Brief statements defining what students are to understand and are able to do at the end of a defined period of learning.

- j. Level: Achievement toward the standard set for a GC – i.e Standard Not Met, Standard Met, Standard Exceeded.
- k. Mid-point Subject: Any subject teaching/developing, evaluating and providing feedback on a GC of a course which evaluates the level of student achievement towards achieving the standard set for Mid-point.
- l. Normative assessment: Also known as Norm-referenced assessment. Awarding grades based on a predetermined distribution. The most common form of normative assessment assumes grades/marks are distributed according to a standard normal distribution curve. Each student's grade in the subject is determined in part by how well other students in the subject do.
- m. Point: Refers to any of three instances in time - Cornerstone, Mid-point or Capstone – where a level of achievement for a GC will be determined for a course.
- n. Standard: Component criteria comprising a GC against which a student's achievement is evaluated.
- o. Subject: A unit of study within a course.
- p. Subject Intended Learning Outcomes (SILOs): Brief statements defining what students are expected to demonstrate they know and can do by the end of a subject.
- q. Summative assessment: Making judgement about student achievements against explicit standards and translating that judgement into a grade; typically used at the end of a subject.

Section 6 - Stakeholders

Responsibility for implementation – Course and Subject Coordinators; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic); College Pro Vice-Chancellors; Heads of School.

Responsibility for monitoring implementation and compliance – Associate Pro Vice-Chancellors; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic); Education Committee; Coursework Committee; Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Quality and Innovation); Executive Director, Quality and Standards.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	28th November 2016
Review Date	15th July 2018
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	27th November 2016
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
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