



# UCL's Curriculum Design Principles

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# About UCL's Curriculum Design Principles

This document sets out UCL's Curriculum Design Principles. These principles provide a framework to help us deliver our ambitions for Excellence in Education consistently through our course curricula, facilitated by the PEP2 Curriculum Review process. The principles have been developed collaboratively with UCL staff and students.

The Curriculum Design Principles will help ensure that our courses remain academically challenging and coherent for students, are attractive to future applicants, and optimise UCL staff expertise and student potential.

Equality, inclusion, diversity, respect and care for our global community of students and staff are essential components of UCL's Curriculum Design Principles. The principles support our mission to 'educate future citizens, leaders and innovators who will make positive impacts in the world'.



# UCL's Curriculum Design Principles

## 1 **Cutting-Edge Content**

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Content and pedagogy are researched, relevant, and up-to-date, providing students with a future-focused and academically challenging curriculum that is aligned with sector benchmarks and meets the needs of a diverse and changing global society.

## 2 **Coherent Choice**

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Courses are designed to provide academically coherent, informed, and realistic choices, enabling students to explore their academic and career interests.

## 3 **Structured Progression**

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The course design supports student learning progression by appropriate ordering of core, optional and elective modules and assessment activities at each course stage in alignment with UCL's credit and levels framework.

## 4 **Aligned Assessment**

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There is a clear course assessment strategy that supports progression, tests learning outcomes, and ensures academic integrity in line with UCL's ambitions for effective feedback and assessment.

## 5 **Optimised Engagement**

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The course creates community belonging and engagement through rich and rewarding learning opportunities and high-quality learning resources and academic support that help students to make the most of their time at university.





## Principle

## Enhanced Description

### 1 Cutting-Edge Content

Content and pedagogy are research-led, relevant, and up-to-date, providing students with a future-focused and academically challenging curriculum that is aligned with sector benchmarks and meets the needs of a diverse and changing global society.

- > Academic content is aligned with the relevant QAA benchmark statement and PSRB requirements, offers appropriate breadth and depth of learning, and introduces topics in an appropriate sequence.
- > Academic content is research-led and provides educational challenge as appropriate to course level, requiring students to acquire and apply knowledge, understanding, and skills as appropriate to the discipline(s).
- > Academic content is up-to-date, and representative of current disciplinary knowledge and theory, pedagogy and practice, and of diverse and inclusive topics and perspectives.
- > Academic content is relevant for contemporary industry and professional practice, and enables students to acquire transferrable skills in alignment with the Pillars of Employability.
- > Courses should include a research module (i.e. a dissertation or research project), and opportunities for practical and applied learning.
- > Courses should include content that aligns to wider curriculum initiatives such as the Grand Challenges, Sustainability, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Research-Intensive Education; and include interdisciplinary theory and practice where appropriate.



## Principle

## Enhanced Description

### 2 Coherent Choice

Courses are designed to provide academically coherent, informed and realistic choices, enabling students to explore their academic and career interests.

- > Courses demonstrate a coherent path of optionality through the programme that aligns with course learning outcomes.
- > Courses align with UCL's agreed module credit structure of modules at multiples of 15 (e.g. 30, 45, 60, or 90) credit weightings. Undergraduate Dissertations and Masters Dissertations/Substantive Projects and Placements may carry a higher credit-weighting (e.g. 90 credits) but must be a multiple of 15.
- > Courses are designed with an appropriate approach to electives for the discipline and level of study to support interdisciplinary learning.
- > Each optional module collection (i.e. each 15 credit 'slot' of options within a course diet) offers curated and realistic choice.
- > First term of the first year of a course (both UG and PGT) should normally include a majority of core modules.
- > Optional module requisites are clearly defined throughout the course.



## Principle

## Enhanced Description

### 3 Structured Progression

The course design supports student learning progression by appropriate ordering of core, optional and elective modules and assessment activities at each course stage in alignment with UCL's credit and levels framework.

- > Module levels must be appropriate for each year of study. Normally, this would mean:
  - > No level 6 modules may be taught in year 1 of UG course.
  - > No level 4 modules may be taught in year 3 or 4 of UG courses.
  - > Only level 7 modules may be taught in year 4 of an integrated masters course.
  - > At least 150 credits of PGT courses should be at level 7.
- > Joint and triple degrees have equal weighting of modules from the different joint/triple subjects across the degree at each level.
- > Course diets must not include core modules at a higher or lower level than the associated year of study (i.e. level 4 in 1st year, level 7 at PGT).
- > 1st year UG should normally consist of level 4 modules; 2nd year UG should normally consist of level 5 modules; 3rd year UG should normally consist of level 6 modules.
- > Exit routes leading to interim qualifications (e.g. Diplomas & Certificates) should be set up for all courses (UG and PGT).



## Principle

## Enhanced Description

### 4 Aligned Assessment

There is a clear course assessment strategy that supports progression, tests learning outcomes, and ensures academic integrity in line with UCL's ambitions for effective feedback and assessment.

- > Course assessment design should enable the scaffolded development and consolidation of knowledge, understanding, and skills across the course.
- > Course assessment design should support the timely return of quality assessment feedback that supports students' learning progression.
- > Course assessment design should ensure the academic integrity of the degree award.
- > There is stretch and diversity in the design and delivery of assessment tasks and, where appropriate, student choice.
- > If modules are taught at multiple levels, assessment must be clearly differentiated to meet the relevant course level.
- > Core module assessments are aligned with course learning aims/outcomes, and all are delivered in a suitable order.
- > Inclusive and alternative assessment strategies should be identified as an integrated element of the course design.





## Principle

## Enhanced Description

### 5 Optimised Engagement

The course creates community belonging and engagement through rich and rewarding learning opportunities and high-quality learning resources and academic support that help students to make the most of their time at university.

- > Courses offer and/or signpost students to extracurricular activities that support learning, engagement, and employability, ideally aligned to the UCL Pillars of Employability.
- > Learning resources are delivered in a variety of formats and are designed to be accessible, inclusive and engaging, and to represent diverse perspectives.
- > Students are provided with opportunities to feedback on and support the ongoing enhancement of learning experiences as part of curriculum delivery.
- > Courses should have a common disciplinary core to support the development of cohort community, normally achieved by having core modules at all levels for UG and in term 1 for PGT.
- > The course should normally provide and/or signpost students to centrally provided learning opportunities in term 3.
- > Personal tutoring is delivered to support students to navigate their course, make study choices, and reflect on progress.