Curriculum Framework Principles

University of Staffordshire Curriculum Framework (UoS CF)

The Curriculum Framework (CF) outlines a set of principles (referred to as the 'CF pillars') which underpin our curriculum, and these are to be used by course teams in the design, delivery and enhancement of new and existing programmes. These CF pillars ensure that all University of Staffordshire students experience a programme that is designed to develop their discipline expertise alongside key intellectual, professional and personal attributes.

The University of Staffordshire (UoS) core values provide the foundation for the CF; these are to always be:

- ambitious and inspirational
- fair and inclusive
- curious and daring
- innovative and enterprising.

Furthermore, the CF aligns with the core priorities of our University Strategic Plan, providing:

- Next Generation Education – delivering programmes that meet the needs of the future, with digital at the core, enterprise and entrepreneurship embedded throughout, global mindsets developed and career readiness as a fundamental focus.
- Next Generation Experience – putting the student at the centre of the learning experience, encouraging flexibility and personalisation through simmersive and phenomenon based learning, and transdisciplinary experiences.
- Next Generation Engagement – aligning the curriculum to industry, business and community needs, at a local, national and international level, and embedding research and innovation throughout.
- Next Generation Environment – contributing to a healthy, creative and empowering culture through inclusive and sustainable practices.

The CF pillars also reflect the requirements of relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies.

Purpose

The CF is a blueprint for designing, delivering and assuring the quality of educational programmes. It provides a consistent structure and set of guiding principles that ensure all programmes align with the values and priorities of the university, and the evolving needs of students and employers. It has been designed to be used alongside the 'University of Staffordshire Course Designers Guide' which refers to specific university policies relating to teaching, learning, assessment and feedback.

The UoS CF will ensure that:

- All courses reflect the strategic priorities of the university, which include enhancing employability, promoting inclusivity, developing digital literacy, engaging in authentic and applied learning and prioritising sustainable thinking.
- There is a consistent process for designing and reviewing courses, providing a standard level of expectation for teaching, learning, assessment and feedback.
- There is a common framework for all courses to align with, promoting collaboration and transdisciplinary opportunities.

- All courses are able to evidence an equity of opportunity for students to engage with learning experiences that are core to a university curriculum.
- Students are able to understand the overall purpose and progression of their course, supporting academic, professional and personal transitions and development throughout their studies.
- Staff have a set of pedagogical principles that guide how courses should be designed, delivered and enhanced.

Curriculum Framework Pillars

The CF has five core pillars:

Pillar	Principle
Accessibility and Inclusivity	All of our courses will be reflective of, relevant for and accessible to our global community of students.
Simulation	All of our courses will embed authentic learning opportunities throughout, enabling students to develop intellectual, professional and personal skills through engagement with complex, applied and inquiry-based experiences.
Employability, Enterprise and Professional Practice	All of our courses will ensure students are prepared for a diverse range of careers, by embedding opportunities to explore and experience meaningful work-based learning opportunities and to connect their studies with future vocations.
Sustainability	All of our courses will provide the opportunity to explore and reflect on the environmental, social and economic sustainability issues relevant to their specific discipline and sector.
Academic, Digital and Research Skills	All of our courses will enable students to progress and reflect on their academic, digital and research skill development.

Curriculum Framework Alignment Mapping

Course teams will need to map their course to each of the CF pillars and evidence how and where they have addressed these components in their curriculum.

Course teams will complete the 'Curriculum Framework Mapping Document' appended to the Programme Specification. This will allow teams to evidence, using specific examples from across the entirety of their programme, how their course content, their teaching & learning approaches, their assessment and feedback methods and (where possible) their co-curricular opportunities map to the CF pillars.

In the Mapping Document, course teams will identify the specific modules where the pillar is embedded as well as providing a narrative outlining how the themes of that pillar are progressively developed throughout the programme.

An exemplar 'Curriculum Framework Mapping Document' can be accessed at the Curriculum Framework Resources WorkVivo page.

In addition to expertise within Academic Schools (Associate Deans, Heads of Department, Course Directors and Leaders, Academic staff, etc.) support and guidance in completing the 'Curriculum Framework Mapping Document' is available as follows:

- Reflective questions which will prompt course teams to consider how each pillar is embedded (see below)

- Resources provided on WorkVivo for each pillar
- Educational Developer Support (contact the designated departmental Educational Developer)
- Specialist expertise related to the five pillars:

1. The Inclusive Education and Impact Team (iei@staffs.ac.uk) for support with the Accessibility and Inclusivity pillar.
2. The Digital Education Team (TILEHub@staffs.ac.uk) and Simulation Technical Specialists via SimTeam@staffs.ac.uk for support with the Simulation pillar.
3. The assigned Career Liaison Officer (careers@staffs.ac.uk) and the [Academic Toolkit](#) on WorkVivo for support with the Employability, Enterprise and Professional Practice pillar.
4. The 'Sustainable Curriculum' toolkit available in the Curriculum Framework resources on WorkVivo for support with the Sustainability pillar.
5. The Academic Skills Team (AcademicSkillsTeam@groups.staffs.ac.uk) and The Digital Education Team (TILEHub@staffs.ac.uk) for support with the Academic, Digital and Research Skills pillar.

CF Pillars - Reflective Questions

Course teams will be asked to consider the five CF pillars from the perspective of the student progressing through their course, in respect to:

- Content (what they are teaching)
- Teaching Methods (how and when this is being taught/learnt, and the purpose of modules and learning activities as building blocks of the programme)
- Assessment & Feedback (how they are assessing & how the student is continually developing through reflection on feedback)
- Co-curricular (where opportunities exist beyond the core curriculum for learners to engage in interdisciplinary learning, co-created activities, or areas where they can exercise choice)

The following reflective questions have been designed to prompt discussion and reflection within course teams as to how the individual pillars have been meaningfully and holistically embedded and developed throughout the programme.

1.1 Accessibility and Inclusivity

Inclusivity:

- **How have you embedded a range of perspectives, identities and lived experiences within your course content to ensure all learners feel reflected and meaningfully included?**
  Consider how your materials, examples, case studies, and reading lists include voices and knowledge from historically underrepresented or marginalised communities such as those shaped by race, gender, disability, socio-economic background, and global contexts.

- **How have your learning activities been designed to foster a sense of belonging and engagement for students from a range of intersecting backgrounds and lived experiences?**
  This includes applying Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to offer multiple ways for students to engage with learning — through varied participation methods, flexible formats, and approaches that support motivation, collaboration, and connection.

Accessibility:

- **How have you applied the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to proactively ensure that all students across a range of physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental health needs can access and engage with your course materials?**

This includes designing content that can be accessed in multiple ways, offering flexible formats, and anticipating diverse learning needs through varied modes of presentation, interaction, and support. Please note, when considering your teaching and learning strategy, specifically in relation to delivery mode (online, in person, etc.), you will need to ensure that you are compliant with UKVI requirements, as per the Remote Delivery Policy.

- **How have your assessment and feedback methods provided flexible, equitable opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning, recognising different strengths, needs, and contexts?**
For example, offering a variety of assessment formats, enabling student choice where appropriate, or providing feedback that is accessible, timely and supportive for all learners.

1.2 Simulation

- How will students use simulated content (i.e. laboratory/participant data, industry standard templates, published survey data, interview recordings, etc.) to develop their understanding of their discipline?

- How have you utilised simulation in the delivery of your programme (i.e. case study applications, live briefs, online/digital or physical simulations, simulated professional practice, project work, leadership tasks, phenomenon-based learning, etc.) and through authentic assessments?

- How does this simulation enable students to acquire skills relevant to their discipline?

- How have your students reflected on their simulated experiences?

1.3 Employability, Enterprise and Professional Practice

Explore:

- **How have you built awareness of professional practice, industry expectations and an entrepreneurial mindset in your students?**

Consider how you encourage self-reflection, careers research, and early engagement with employer insights to support the student's employability. For example, how are you using self-assessments and exploring individual motivations to enable students to develop self-awareness, understand the industry expectations, and begin building their professional identity.

Experience:

- **How have you encouraged students to develop and apply professional practice through participation in work related experiences?**

For example, through enterprise activities, simulated events, work-based learning, study abroad, placements or project work. Consider how employer engagement is embedded in your curriculum (i.e. design, delivery, assessment, extra-curricular opportunities, etc.). How do you develop professionalism in your students (i.e. employer interactions, ethical practice, code of practice, resilience, engagement/attendance, etc.)?

Connect:

- **How have you encouraged students to reflect on their strengths, experiences and areas for development, and use these reflections to prepare them for professional interactions (i.e. job interviews, etc.)?**

For example, through preparation for interviews, assessment centres, recruitment activities, networking events, etc. Consider how your students reflect on their intellectual, professional and personal attributes and relate these to future employment. For example, reflection on the students entrepreneurial mindset developed through activities throughout their course (i.e. creativity, initiative, confidence, problem-solving, adaptability, etc.).

1.4 Sustainability

• How have you embedded the concepts/topic of sustainability (environmental, social and economic) into your discipline?

• How do you provide students with the opportunity to study, research and participate in sustainability as part of their studies (i.e. global challenges, case studies, etc.)?

• How have you considered sustainability in your learning, teaching, assessment and feedback approaches?

• Is content for the discipline mapped to UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs), or equivalent professional standards, in a way that resonates clearly with the student?

1.5 Academic, Digital and Research Skills

• How have you integrated and co-delivered sessions on skills development with our Library and Academic Skills Tutors and the Digital Education Team at different stages throughout the course?

• How is the development of these skills made clear through the assessments and feedback (i.e. linking to where specific skills need to be developed, linking to LibGuides https://libguides.staffs.ac.uk/study-skills, addressed in future tutorials, etc.)?

• How do you support the ongoing development of academic (i.e. critical thinking, communication, etc.), digital (i.e. information management, data analysis, AI, specialised software, etc.) and research skills (i.e. literature searching, research methods, etc.) across the lifetime of the course?

• How do students reflect on their development of academic, digital and research skills, and align these to their future career requirements?

Evaluation of Curriculum Framework Alignment Mapping

Course Teams will submit their completed 'Curriculum Framework Mapping Document' (appended to their Programme Specification) for review and approval through the Academic Course Approval Process.

Following the initial course approval stage, further development and enhancement of the CF pillars within the course curriculum will be reviewed as part of the continuous quality enhancement processes (i.e. continuous monitoring meetings, etc.) and aligned with quality indicators (i.e. Course Risk Ratings, Student Feedback, Course Action Plans, etc).