

Department of Health

Curriculum Transformation: Phase 1 Summary

As a Vanguard department for the University of Bath's Curriculum Transformation, in November 2017 the Department for Health began the process of reviewing, refreshing, and revising their curriculum offer in line with the core objectives of the University's Education Strategy. The programmes included in this activity were:

- BSc/MSci Health and Exercise Science
- BSc/MSci Sport and Exercise Science
- BA Sport and Social Sciences

From November to January the core Programme Development Team identified to lead the Department's transformation process met regularly to undertake associated work. Sub-Programme Development Teams for each of the programmes were formed to take forward programme-specific actions and discussions.

Stakeholder engagement

At the start of Phase 1 the Centre for Learning and Teaching collated useful data and information for the programmes from a range of sources: NSS, UKES, DLHE, analysis of competitor institutions etc.

An initial curriculum development workshop was held for the core Programme Development Team, facilitated by the Centre for Learning and Teaching, with representatives from Academic Registry in attendance. The Programme Development Team firstly undertook a 'PEST' analysis of the political, economic, socio-cultural, and technological factors that may currently, or in the future, affect the programmes. They then carried out a 'SWOT' analysis to understand the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the programmes. Finally, the Programme Development Team explored who the key stakeholders are, or could be, for the programmes and how they might add value to the curriculum development process.

The process of internal stakeholder engagement began with a survey to all staff within the department. This survey gathered information on staff perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the current programmes, and opportunities for enhancement. The survey was facilitated through the Bristol Online Survey platform, with reminder prompts sent to staff to ensure a strong response rate.

Following this, two student focus groups were held with student representatives, facilitated by members of the Centre for Learning and Teaching. Discussions included the current programme structure and content, career training, programme title, programme strengths/weaknesses, students' pre-university expectations, and placement year experiences. In total, the two focus groups were attended by 16 student representatives and the Students' Union Education Officer. **Again, the**

To engage with external stakeholders, alumni and employers were identified by members of the Sub-Programme Development Teams and invited to attend an engagement event at the University in January 2018. The event, which was run by the core Programme Development Team, with support from the Centre for Learning and Teaching, explored the skills and knowledge needed in the sector, potential future changes which might effect graduates, and possibilities for enhancing collaboration between the department and employers. Padlet was used to record the information from each discussion group.

Curriculum development ideas and innovation

Representatives from the core Programme Development Team attended a conference at Brunel University to explore and report back on alternative curriculum structures.

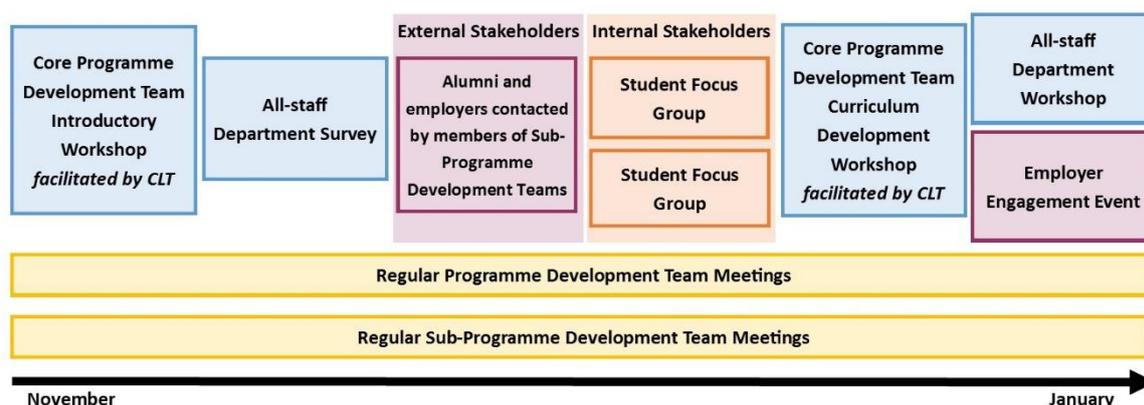
A workshop to explore the broader context of curriculum development was held for the Programme Development Team, facilitated by the Centre for Learning and Teaching. This workshop allowed the Programme Development Team to engage with multiple perspectives on curriculum development including inclusivity, public engagement, student empowerment (e.g. PAL), models of engaged learning, and the use of technology to enhance learning.

As part of the Phase 1 process, the BA Sport and Social Sciences programme sought approval through the University's governance structure for a change of programme title. This was subsequently approved and the new programme title will be BSc Sport Management and Coaching. Following the completion of Phase 1 the prospectus copy was updated.

Phase 1 process overview

Programmes in Health

Curriculum Transformation 'Phase 1' Activity



Towards Phase 2

The following themes emerging from Phase 1 were identified to be taken forward by the Sub-Programme Development Teams:

- Importance of transferable skills
The employer engagement event highlighted the importance of developing transferable skills. The employers who attended indicated that they want students to be adaptive problem solvers able to analyse and manipulate data.
- Technology
The need for students to embrace new technologies for continuous improvement was highlighted by employers.
- Group work earlier in the programme
Students in noted some issues with group work, which might be addressed through low-stakes group work activities from an early stage of the programme in order to develop and build skills.
- Enhancing current strengths
The staff survey identified the use of research-informed practice, assessment variety, and placements as key strengths, with links between content, clearer progression across years, and opportunities for students to gain professional accreditations as part of their course as areas for improvement.

Lessons learned and advice for other departments undertaking Phase 1

The following lessons learned are included to help colleagues in other departments in undertaking Phase 1 Curriculum Transformation effectively and efficiently:

- A core departmental Programme Development Team, and where relevant Sub-Programme Development Teams, who meet regularly, are essential for both the coordination of stakeholder engagement activities and the evaluation and application of the information generated.
- Student engagement should be initiated early on in the process. In addition to student focus groups this may include inviting student representatives to participate in Programme Development and Sub-Programme Development Team Meetings, SSLC meetings, or providing information/feedback during lectures.
- Support from the Centre for Learning and Teaching, Registry, Marketing, and Admissions is necessary in Phase 1. Administration and facilitation support is required in order to deliver activities such as focus groups and questionnaires and to gather and interpret findings.
- Phase 1 stakeholder engagement activity will generate a large amount of information. It is important to collate this carefully, and take time to identify key issues arising, higher order themes, and priorities for taking forward into Phase 2 activity. The dedicated Curriculum Transformation SharePoint site provides an efficient means by which staff can collate and share documents and resources across all related activities.
- The key learning outcomes from stakeholder engagement activities, once identified, should be shared with the original participants. For instance, providing a summary of responses and how this data will inform future work to students who attended focus groups, or staff who completed an online survey. This usefully maintains and strengthens engagement relationships and enables participants to confirm or challenge the department's findings.
- The Principles and Parameters underpinning Curriculum Transformation provide a useful, and tangible, means by which to engage departmental staff in the process. It is important to outline the narrative for change, including the intended outcomes, in order for it not be viewed simply as 'change for change's sake'. In particular, the Principles are clear that the process desires to build on existing success – this is therefore an opportunity for departments and staff to highlight what they do well, and enhance this further.
- It is important that Phase 1 activity links clearly to Phase 2. It is useful to ensure space in the transition to consolidate thinking. A summary document – linking departmental findings to the Principles and Parameters – would provide a useful overview of thinking at this stage, with clearly identified priorities for transformation.
- Where modules are shared with other programmes, it is important that departments converse between Phases 1 and 2 to ensure shared expectations.
- Specific Principles and Parameters may require support to help departmental consideration of their application. The Centre for Learning and Teaching is able to coordinate and/or facilitate this.