



Curriculum Framework 2019-2020

Frequently Asked Questions

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For the Curriculum Framework Specification, templates and guidance documentation please visit the following webpage:

www.port.ac.uk/curriculumframework

Contents

Area	Question
1. Curriculum Framework	1.1 Which courses are affected by this Curriculum Framework?
	1.2 When does this Curriculum Framework come into effect?
	1.3 Do collaborative courses need to follow the Curriculum Framework?
	1.4 There is an articulation arrangement between an ICP course and my course, does this matter?
	1.5 Are programmes now called courses?
	1.6 Are units now called modules?
	1.7 (NEW) Can I design a course with non-standard and/or multiple start points?
	1.8 Do I need to include a language option at level 5?
	1.9 Can I use Induction Week to begin formal teaching?
	1.10 When are the Consolidation weeks?
	1.11 What are the Consolidation weeks in the middle of Teaching Block 1 and 2 used for?
	1.12 Can Central Timetabling assist with room bookings for activities scheduled in the Consolidation weeks?

Area	Question
	1.13 What happens if a Teaching Block 1 module needs to have an exam for example for PSRB purposes?
	1.14 What happens in the Assessment and Marking period after the Christmas break?
	1.15 (UPDATED) Can I use In-Class Tests as part of my assessment strategy?
	1.16 (NEW) What changes are planned for the examination and assessment regulations?
	1.17 (NEW) Do all assessment artefacts need to be submitted digitally via the VLE?
	1.18 (UPDATED) I had an exemption from the previous Curriculum Framework, does it still stand going forward and how do I apply for a new exemption?
	1.19 Do top-up courses need to embed all the Hallmarks of a Portsmouth Graduate?
	1.20 My course is running-out, does it need to meet the requirements of the new Curriculum Framework?
	1.21 (NEW) Do Credit Bearing Short Courses need to meet the Curriculum Framework requirements?
	1.22 (NEW) How much will students have to pay when repeating modules with a larger credit volume?
2. Approval Process	2.1 I am making some substantial changes to my course but it affects less than 120 credits of the overall course, does the course need to be approved through a Departmental Curriculum Framework Approval Committee?
	2.2 I am only changing my course to reflect the new short fat module structure, what do I need to do?
	2.3 Does the External Assessor participating in the Departmental Curriculum Framework Approval Committee have to be a subject specialist?
	2.4 Can the External Assessor be an existing External Examiner?
	2.5 My professional body wish to participate in the Departmental Curriculum Framework Approval Committee event, is this possible?
	2.6 How should I consult with students on material changes to my course?
	2.7 Do all Course Leaders and course members need to be available to attend the Departmental Curriculum Framework Approval Committee event?

Area	Question
3. Documentation	3.1 Can I update my old Programme Specification rather than complete the new Course Specification?
	3.2 Do I need to update the Course Specification annually?
	3.3 Can I update my old Unit Descriptors rather than complete new ones?
	3.4 How do I use the Portsmouth Graduate Hallmarks Checklist?
	3.5 The new Course Specification document has a box for minimum cohort size, what is this?

1. Curriculum Framework

1.1 Which courses are affected by this Curriculum Framework?

All UoP delivered campus taught courses and Franchised collaborative courses, see question 1.3 about collaborative courses also. This is a 'big bang' approach rather than phased in over a couple of years. Further guidance will be developed in the coming weeks for Degree Apprenticeships and distance learning courses.

1.2 When does this Curriculum Framework come into effect?

From September 2019. During 2017/18 course teams will review their courses to ensure they comply with the new Framework. This work needs to be completed by the end of November 2018 in readiness for the admissions cycle and launch in September 2019. Please note however that the new academic year structure comes in to effect from 2018/19. This means that some of the questions in this document will apply from 2018/19, for example relating to Induction, Consolidation and post-Christmas Assessment and Marking periods.

1.3 Do collaborative courses need to follow the Curriculum Framework?

All Franchised courses must follow the UoP Curriculum Framework. Course teams and University Academic Contacts must work closely with partners to support partners through the review of the Franchised course so that it aligns with the home course. There is no requirement that Validated and Validated External collaborative courses to align with the Framework, however partners are encouraged to adopt the Hallmarks of a Portsmouth Graduate. Notwithstanding, the University Academic Contact for Validated and Validated External courses should plan with their partner a timetable to migrate course and module documentation into the new Course Specification and Module Specification templates. If you are not sure if a collaborative course is Franchised, Validated or Validated External please contact Mark Shaw, Partnerships Manager on extension 3196.

1.4 There is an articulation arrangement between an ICP course and my course, does this matter?

Yes - it does matter. If your course is linked with ICP then the Course Leader must involve ICP in the course development discussions and ensure that any planned changes to the UoP course continues to fit with the ICP pathway.

1.5 Are programmes now called courses?

Yes – from September 2019 all programmes will be called courses. This means Programme Specifications will be called Course Specifications. With time all documentation will be updated to refer to courses as they are updated.

1.6 Are units now called modules?

Yes – from September 2019 Units will be called modules. This means Unit Descriptors will be called Module Specifications and our new Student System will refer to modules. With time all documentation will be updated to refer to modules as they are updated.

1.7 Can I design a course with non-standard and/or multiple start points?

Yes – the Curriculum Framework has been written so that there is greater flexibility in course design and delivery, offering greater student choice. The main intake points are September and January. However, some courses may need alternative or multiple start dates. This may be especially true for Degree Apprenticeships. A new course proposal with non-standard/multiple start points will need to robustly demonstrate through the course approval process the market rationale and financial viability for alternative/multiple start points. Also, course teams will need to demonstrate how students will be provided with a quality experience studying an alternative course delivery pattern.

1.8 Do I need to include a language option at level 5?

Yes - all UoP campus-based courses must ensure that students have the option to take a language at level 5 for credit, but courses may decide whether to offer IWLP in TB1 and/or TB2. All IWLP languages will be offered in both teaching blocks. IWLP will also be available for interest only. If there is a formal professional body restriction which makes it impossible to offer a language option then the course team may apply for an exemption.

1.9 Can I use Induction Week to begin formal teaching?

No – Induction week is counted as the first week of the teaching block, plus 5 weeks of teaching then a consolidation week followed by a further six weeks of teaching. This means that there will be 11 standard teaching weeks in Teaching Block 1 rather than the current 12, but there is the opportunity for directed learning activities during the consolidation week.

1.10 When are the Consolidation weeks?

There is a consolidation week at week 7 in Teaching Block 1, and again in week 7 in Teaching Block 2. For clarity, under the new academic year structure and Curriculum Framework, there are no consolidation weeks at the end of Teaching Block 2.

1.11 What are the Consolidation weeks in the middle of Teaching Block 1 and 2 used for?

It is perhaps more helpful to say what the Consolidation weeks are not to be used for – they are not to be used for formal teaching or examinations. However, they can be used for field trips and employer engagement pursuits which cannot be scheduled at other points in the timetable. The main purpose of consolidation weeks is to offer activities for students which help them consolidate their learning and/or prepare for future topics. For further guidance on different approaches please speak to Academic Development, DCQE.

1.12 Can Central Timetabling assist with room bookings for activities scheduled in the Consolidation weeks?

Yes – Where course-based, department-based or year-based activities are being planned, then Central Timetabling can book rooms subject to availability. In order for an activity to appear on students' timetables the activity needs to be linked to a module that the students are already registered on in the Student System.

1.13 What happens if a Teaching Block 1 module needs to have an exam for example for PSRB purposes?

There will only be one exam sitting at the end of Teaching Block 2. Where possible short fat exam based assessment should be run as a Teaching Block 2 module. Where there are PSRB requirements for a TB1 module then scheduling of the exam should be done in conjunction with CTU in week 24. Course Teams will be required to provide evidence of the reason for administering an exam in this period through the Curriculum Framework Approval Process Route A or B.

1.14 What happens in the Assessment and Marking period after the Christmas break?

The first week is reserved for approved formal examinations and other assessment activity: no other activities should take place. The second week is a marking week for staff. During this week students should be given directed activities.

1.15 Can I use In-Class Tests as part of my summative assessment strategy?

Yes – but sparingly. Due to the various ways in which in-class tests are used and some of the logistical challenges encountered in administering them, their use and purpose and when they are being used, has to be agreed as part of the Curriculum Framework Approval Process to support them being used judiciously and being fully transparent to all in the assessment strategy. Where there is approval for their use as part of the summative assessment load they must be administered under examination conditions and the Fitness to Sit policy will apply. In-class tests should not be used instead of formal examinations during the Teaching Block 2 Assessment and Marking period, see question 1.12 above also. Summative In-Class Test forms part of the examination assessment load. The use of assessment

exercises for exclusively formative purposes, which could include in-class tests, is left to the professional judgement of the course teams.

A series of small/regular in class tests (taken through the teaching weeks) should be recorded on a Module Specification as 'Set Exercise - Exam'. A Set Exercise – Exam is typically characterised as a summative assessment exercise which is taken through the teaching weeks, in the scheduled teaching room and would not typically be more than 40 minutes in duration or generate more than 800 words of written text, or equivalent.

1.16 What changes are planned for the examination and assessment regulations?

Due to the changes to the Curriculum Framework substantial changes to the Examination and Assessment Regulations will be required. Several areas have already been identified for review over summer 2018, including the simplifying of regulations to reduce the number of exemptions, consideration of the compensation and second attempt assessment limit, and reviewing the verification process. Papers for discussion will go to the relevant academic committees early in the next academic year.

1.17 Do all assessment artefacts need to be submitted digitally via the VLE?

The Assessment for Learning Policy (in the Curriculum Framework Operational Annex) states that 'Assessments should be submitted, marked and returned digitally via the VLE'. However, there are exceptions, for example crafted artefacts can still be submitted in their actual form. There may be other artefacts, such as a graphically designed poster/object, or other designed objects, designed and fabricated for a particular purpose, that, due to their physical and material nature being a necessary part of the aspects to be assessed, have to be submitted in that material form.

1.18 I had an exemption from the previous Curriculum Framework, does it still stand going forward and how do I apply for a new exemption?

No, If you would like to keep in place a previously approved exemption from the 2012 Curriculum Framework which you believe still applies then you will need to seek approval using the Exemption Request process. All Exemption Requests must be approved by the Faculty ADA prior to being submitted. Exemption Requests not supported and approved by the ADA will not be considered. [exemption request form](#) to courseexemptions@port.ac.uk

1.19 Do top-up courses need to embed all the Hallmarks of a Portsmouth Graduate?

All UoP courses should embed the Hallmarks, but many students will come with a certain level of the Hallmarks already, a Level 6 top-up Course should be providing opportunities to enhance the academic skills and career-enhancing activities those students already have to some extent.

1.20 My course is running-out, does it need to meet the requirements of the new Curriculum Framework?

This will depend on how many years are left to run out. If by 2019/20 your course will be in its final year of run out, then it will not need to have a course restructure to meet the new Curriculum Framework and may continue to run out with long thin modules. Nor will it be necessary to migrate the Programme Specification and Unit Descriptors to the new Course and Module Specification templates. However, the course team should continue to review the final year to ensure that the Hallmarks of a Portsmouth Graduate are embedded wherever possible. If the course has two or more years remaining to run out then it must meet the requirements of the new Curriculum Framework.

1.21 Do Credit Bearing Short Courses need to meet the Curriculum Framework requirements?

Credit Bearing Short Courses which are wholly made up of existing modules that have already been approved through Route A or B will automatically be aligned and approved. Credit Bearing Short courses which consist of standalone modules do not need to align with the Curriculum Framework nor do they have to be submitted for approval.

1.22 How much will students have to pay when repeating modules with a larger credit volume?

Repeating students who are going into 2019/20 having to take a new module which is at a higher credit volume will only be charged the original unit credit volume amount?

2 Approval Process

2.1 I am making some substantial changes to my course but it affects less than 120 credits of the overall course, does the course need to be approved through a Departmental Curriculum Framework Approval Committee?

Your ADA will make the final judgement as to how the course should be approved. Defining what and how much change is substantial or material is a difficult thing to quantify and it will ultimately come down to academic judgement. The Curriculum Framework Approval Process document sets out what are substantial changes for the purposes of this exercise. If the changes affect 120 credits or more of the overall course then the course needs to be submitted to a Departmental Curriculum Framework Approval Committee. However, you may have substantial change which affects less than 120 credits but still significantly changes the overall course. An example of this is if a core module is withdrawn and its module learning outcomes link to key course learning outcomes. If you are concerned that the overall course is affected in a significant way then this must be discussed with your Associate Dean (Academic) (ADA).

2.2 I am only changing my course to reflect the new short fat module structure, what do I need to do?

If it is clear from the review by your ADA that this is the only change, you will not be required to undergo a Departmental Curriculum Framework Approval Committee event. However you will still need to review the course as a course team and complete all the required documentation for Route B outlined in

the Curriculum Framework Approval Process document. In order to change modules from long thin to short fat, you will need to complete the existing Course Structure Change process.

2.3 Does the External Assessor participating in the Departmental Curriculum Framework Approval Committee have to be a subject specialist?

As the Departmental Curriculum Framework Approval Committee event will be considering all courses requiring approval at the one event, it is unlikely than any one person can be a subject specialist for all courses. Therefore, it is not essential that the External is a subject specialist, although it would be good if they could cover as broad a scope as possible. Someone with a background in quality assurance would be appropriate also.

2.4 Can the External Assessor be an existing External Examiner?

No - the External Examiner is not completely independent as she/he has a contract with the University.

2.5 My professional body wish to participate in the Departmental Curriculum Framework Approval Committee event, is this possible?

It may be possible for your professional body to participate, you should speak to your Associate Dean (Academic) to discuss the rationale and logistics of doing this.

2.6 How should I consult with students on material changes to my course?

It is a requirement of the University that all students affected by material course changes must be written to, typically by email, inviting them to comment on the changes. This remains the case for this exercise. However, due to the nature of changes for 2019/20 it may be that Departments or course teams wish to supplement writing to students with additional focus groups or similar activities to better support co-creation and partnership with students in curriculum design. Your Associate Dean (Academic) and Academic Development Department will be able to advise you about good practice across your Faculty and the University.

2.7 Do all Course Leaders and course members need to be available to attend the Departmental Curriculum Framework Approval Committee event?

All Course Leaders with courses presented for approval at the event need to attend, or their representative. However, due to size of room and managing the event, it will not be possible for all course members to attend. If you have any queries about who can attend then please discuss and agree this with your Associate Dean (Academic).

3 Documentation

3.1 Can I update my old Programme Specification rather than complete the new Course Specification?

No - A new Course Specification template has been designed so all courses need to have a new Course Specification for 2019/20 (2018/19 Programme Specifications remain in the old format). The new template includes the latest sector requirements and good practice. The new template is shorter and

aims to be much more relevant to students. We have either removed or put to the back of the document a lot of the quality assurance information which is used for internal purposes.

3.2 Do I need to update the Course Specification annually?

It depends. If you make material changes to the course, particularly to course Learning Outcomes, then you will need to reflect these changes in the Course Specification. However, the document has been designed to reduce the burden on having to annually update it.

3.3 Can I update my old Unit Descriptors rather than complete new ones?

No - a new Module Specification template has been designed so all modules need to migrate to the new template for 2019/2020 (2018/19 Unit Descriptors remains in the current format). The new template has been streamlined and designed to be more resilient to minor module changes which will mean the document remains current longer.

3.4 How do I use the Portsmouth Graduate Hallmarks Course Checklist?

The Hallmarks Course Checklist acts as a prompt/tool to help course teams to consider how the Hallmarks are embedded in the curriculum and facilitates the completion of the Hallmarks Map which is submitted as part A and B approval process.

3.5 The new Course Specification document has a box for minimum cohort size, what is this?

From 2019/20 there is a new University requirement for all UoP based courses to publish via the Course Specification document the course minimum cohort size. This forms part of our obligations under the Competition and Market Authority. The University has set the following minimum cohort size:

FT Undergraduate Campus-Based Course - 20

PT Undergraduate Campus-Based Course - 10 (if co-taught with f/t)

FT Postgraduate Taught Course - 15

PT Postgraduate Taught Course - 10 (if co-taught with f/t)

Further discussion with Deans will take place over the coming weeks to determine if Faculties wish to set lower faculty-based cohort sizes and to determine minimum cohort sizes for distance learning provision. Course Teams cannot set their own minimum cohort sizes.