

## Flexible Curriculum Toolkit Handbook



A toolkit to support programme teams in  
enhancing practice with flexible curricula

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## 1 Summary

Welcome to the Flexible Curricula toolkit handbook which is designed to support programme teams in enhancing practice with flexible curricula.

The Flexible Curricula toolkit is based on the University of Ulster's Viewpoints framework for curriculum enhancement (<http://wiki.ulster.ac.uk/>) and this handbook is modelled on the original Viewpoints handbook. It provides information to help run a two-stage process for:

- Reflecting on changing drivers and needs for flexible curricula.
- Enhancing practice in flexible curricula.

The guidance provided in the toolkit builds on the concept of the Flexible Continuum explored in the outcomes paper from the QAA (Scotland) Flexible Delivery Enhancement Theme, '[A practical guide to providing flexible learning in further and higher education](#)' by John Casey and Pam Wilson and updates and enhances this based on a range of educational innovation initiatives and reports undertaken and produced by sector institutions and educational agencies.

Chapter 2 (Viewpoints introduction) provides a brief summary of the Viewpoints approach, its purpose and benefits and how it has been customised to the context of flexible curricula.

Chapter 3 (The Flexible Curriculum toolkit) describes who can use the toolkit, the resources available and provides a recommended flow-diagram for using it, including options for customising the toolkit.

Chapter 4 (Running workshops) outlines how workshops should be run and makes recommendations for how they should be facilitated and outputs/outcomes captured.

Chapter 5 (Action planning) briefly describes a recommended process for writing up the workshops and action planning, using a template provided as part of the toolkit.

Chapter 6 (Practice points for flexible curricula) documents the key practice point cards.

## 2 Viewpoints introduction

### 2.1 The origin and genesis of Viewpoints

[Viewpoints](#) was a [Jisc-funded curriculum design project](#) at the [University of Ulster](#). It produced a [toolkit](#) to aid programme teams in reflecting on, discussing and planning effective curriculum designs based around four themes: (1) Assessment and Feedback; (2) Information Skills; (3) Learner Engagement and (4) Creativity in the Curriculum. Details of the project can be found on the [Jisc Design Studio](#) and the University of Ulster [Viewpoints wiki](#).

The Viewpoints toolkit has subsequently been adopted by a range of institutions and the Jisc [Panorama](#) project (part of the Jisc [e-Learning Programme](#)) supported a range of pilot projects in different institutions. In addition, the Viewpoints framework has been adapted to other contexts eg

- **Viewpoints for Digital Literacies:** the [University of Greenwich](#) is working on this as an output from their [Digital Literacies in Transition](#) project (part of the Jisc-funded [Developing Digital Literacies](#) programme).
- **Viewpoints for Student Partnerships:** the (student) [Change Agent Network](#) has developed a [Viewpoints toolkit](#) to aid institutions in setting up partnerships with students and students as change agent initiatives. It encompasses four dimensions: (1) Partnership set-up; (2) Partnership implementation; (3) Capabilities, development and accreditation and (4) Evaluation, impact and sustainability.
- **Viewpoints for work-based learning:** a [Viewpoints for Work-based Learning toolkit](#) is being developed as part of a Jisc-funded project within the [Lifelong Learning and Workforce Development](#) programme. It encompasses four key themes: (1) Establishing an employer-provider partnership; (2) Designing and delivering work-based programmes; (3) Reviewing and quality-assuring work-based learning programmes and (4) Guiding and supporting work-based learners.
- **The Flexible Curriculum Toolkit:** the subject of this guide, funded and supported by the QAA Scotland as part of its Enhancement theme work.

An evaluation of the Viewpoints project was conducted by Prof David Nicol and written up in a report "[Transformational Change in Teaching and Learning Recasting the Educational Discourse](#)" (2012). A key quote by David Nicol: "*Workshops succeeded, impressively, in creating change locally but, importantly, in seeding change beyond the immediate participation experience*".

### 2.2 The Flexible Curriculum Toolkit

The QAA in Scotland has supported and funded the development of the Flexible Curricula toolkit as part of its [Flexible Curricula Enhancement Theme programme](#) which builds on the concept of the Flexible Continuum explored in the outcomes paper from the Flexible Delivery Enhancement Theme, '[A practical guide to providing flexible learning in further and higher education](#)' by John Casey and Pam Wilson.

The toolkit comprises the following:

- A set of “**Drivers and Needs**” cards to support programme teams in reflecting on changing drivers and needs for flexible curricula.

An example is given to the right:

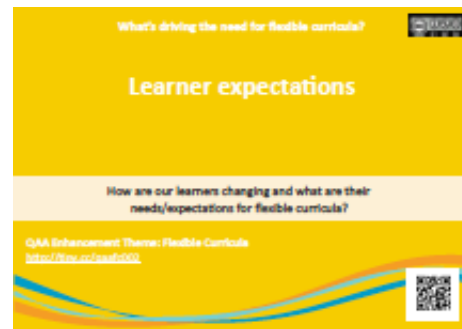
These cards focus on:

- Learner expectations
  - Key Government and sector drivers
  - Key institutional drivers, goals and priorities
  - Globalisation and internationalisation
  - Employer and employer body needs and expectations
  - Changes in what we teach
  - Changes in how we teach
  - Retention
- A set of “**Practice**” cards to support programme teams in enhancing their practice for flexible curricula.

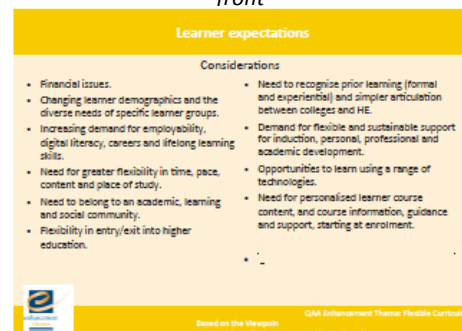
An example is given to the right.

The cards have been designed within four key dimensions of flexibility:

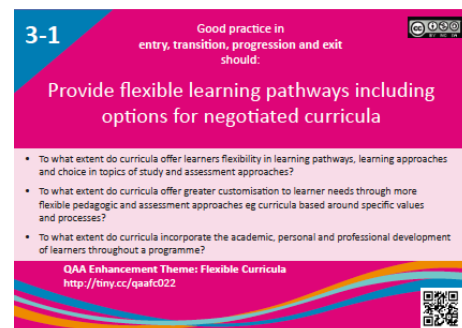
- External engagement and partnerships
- Anytime, anywhere learning
- Entry, transition, progression and exit
- Learning model, personalisation and learner engagement



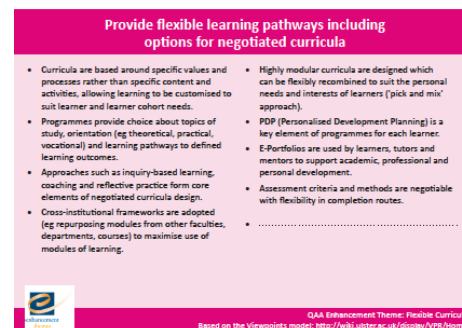
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Front



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- A0 worksheets to support a workshop process of using the cards to reflect on drivers and needs and to enhance practice.

The worksheet is titled '1 Reflecting on Drivers and Needs for Flexible Curricula' and '2 Enhancing practice for Flexible Curricula'. It is divided into four main sections, each with a 'Priority' list (1, 2, 3) and a 'Place cards here' area, followed by a 'Commentary' box.

- Section 1:** Priority 1 is checked. The 'Place cards here' area contains two cards: 'Student needs and expectations (1)' and 'Key Government Driver (1)'. The 'Commentary' box is empty.
- Section 2:** Priority 1 is checked. The 'Place cards here' area contains three cards with detailed text. A blue arrow points from the right side of the page to the third card. The 'Commentary' box is empty.
- Section 3:** Priority 1, 2, and 3 are listed. The 'Place cards here' area is empty. The 'Commentary' box is empty.
- Section 4:** Priority 1, 2, and 3 are listed. The 'Place cards here' area is empty. The 'Commentary' box is empty.

- Guidance materials to support the running and facilitation of workshops.

The development and piloting of the toolkit is managed by a team involving Martha Caddell (Open University), Peter Chatterton (Project Consultant), and Heather Gibson (QAA Scotland). Alan Masson from the University of Ulster (who led the development of the original Viewpoints framework) is acting as a critical friend.

### 2.3 Purpose of using the toolkit

It is the experience of those who the Flexible Curricula toolkit will be used in scenarios such as the following:

- Creating/designing a new programme or modules;
- Reviewing a programme or modules;
- Planning for programme validation/revalidation;
- Planning or reviewing a type of provision eg distance/open/blended/work-based learning, MOOCs, undergraduate or postgraduate provision;

- Developing policies/plans relating to student experience and teaching, learning and assessment strategy;
- Developing staff CPD programmes;
- Designing and implementing partnerships with students for eg students as change agents, students as researchers;
- Reviewing and enhancing institutional professional support services to programme teams eg technology-enhanced learning, ICT, MIS, careers planning, employability;
- Addressing recruitment/retention issues and/or complaints from students in relation to curriculum flexibility.

## 2.4 The process

The process is essentially two key stages:

1. Reflecting on drivers and needs for flexible curricula
2. Enhancing practice with flexible curricula

The following photos show participants using the Flexible Curriculum toolkit.



The following diagrams illustrate the recommended activities within each of the key stages:

### 1. Reflecting on drivers and needs for flexible curricula

The diagram illustrates a worksheet for the activity 'Reflecting on Drivers and Needs for Flexible Curricula'. The worksheet is divided into several sections:



- Header:** Contains two numbered stages: 1. Reflecting on Drivers and Needs for Flexible Curricula, and 2. Enhancing practice for Flexible Curricula.
- Overall objectives:** A section for writing overall objectives for the activity.
- Priority cards:** A section with a 'Priority' column (1, 2, 3) and a 'Place cards here' area. The first instance shows two cards: 'School improvement' and 'Workforce and professional development'. The second instance shows three cards: 'School improvement', 'Workforce and professional development', and 'Partnership working with parents and the community'. The third instance is empty.
- Commentary:** A section for writing commentary on the selected cards.

Numbered steps 1-8 are listed on the right, with arrows pointing to the corresponding sections of the worksheet:

1. Tick which stage you are undertaking.
2. Write your overall objectives for this activity on the A0 worksheet e.g. to review and enhance flexible curriculum provision on a specific programme.
3. As a group, choose which cards you want to focus on and place them front-up on the A0 worksheet - and categorise them into different priorities.
4. Scan the QR code to access further info online.
5. Turn the cards over to show possible different drivers and needs to consider.
6. On each card, tick those considerations that are important drivers and needs to consider (you could also prioritise these individual considerations).
7. As a group, discuss all the ticked considerations and write commentary to clarify why these are important considerations.
8. Capture the final worksheet using e.g. a digital camera.



## 2. Enhancing practice with flexible curricula

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>① Reflecting on Drivers and Needs for Flexible Curricula<br/>                 ② Enhancing practice for Flexible Curricula</p> |   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tick which stage you are undertaking.</li> <li>2. Write your overall objectives for this activity on the A0 worksheet e.g. <i>to review and enhance flexible curriculum provision on a specific programme.</i></li> <li>3. As a group, choose which cards you want to focus on and place them front-up on the A0 worksheet - and categorise them into different priorities.</li> <li>4. Scan the QR code to access further info online.</li> <li>5. Turn the cards over to show possible different detailed practice points to consider.</li> <li>6. On each card, tick those practice points that you wish to address for enhancing practice (you could also prioritise these individual considerations).</li> <li>7. As a group, discuss all the ticked considerations and write commentary to clarify why these are important together with details of how to take them forward.</li> <li>8. Capture the final worksheet using e.g. a digital camera.</li> </ol> |
| Overall objectives   |   |   |
| <p>Priority</p> <p>①<br/>②<br/>③</p>   | <p>Place cards here</p>  |   |
| Commentary   |   |   |
| <p>Priority</p> <p>①<br/>②<br/>③</p>   | <p>Place cards here</p>  |   |
| Commentary   |   |   |
| <p>Priority</p> <p>①<br/>②<br/>③</p>   | <p>Place cards here</p>   |   |
| Commentary   |   |   |
| <p>Priority</p> <p>①<br/>②<br/>③</p>   | <p>Place cards here</p>   |   |
| Commentary   |   |   |

## 2.5 Benefits of using Viewpoints

There are a range of likely benefits from adopting a Viewpoints-type approach:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Curriculum development</b></p>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The workshop helps programme teams to reflect on changing drivers and needs and design curricula to respond appropriately.</li> <li>• The workshop provides a simple approach for programme teams to consider a broad range of aspects to deliver flexible curricula including use of technology-enhanced learning.</li> <li>• The workshop supports collaborative decision-making and prioritising within a highly complex design process.</li> <li>• Outputs from the Viewpoints workshop can be used for evidence for validation/revalidation panels.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Value for programme teams</b></p>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The workshop allows for creative discussion and sharing of ideas around programme design for flexible provision.</li> <li>• The process is built around reflection and effective team dialogue.</li> <li>• Programme teams can focus on shared priorities.</li> <li>• The process enhances effective teamwork and strengthens team building.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Value for students (the learner perspective)</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The workshop and toolkit have a primary focus on learners, their needs and their experience from entry, transition, progression and exit.</li> <li>• The initial stage of reflecting on changing drivers and needs has a strong focus on identifying needs and circumstances of students throughout their learning journey.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Value for the institution</b></p>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Viewpoints approach can be incorporated into strategic policies and plans in relation to quality enhancement including enhancing the student experience and learning, teaching and assessment.</li> <li>• Institutional professional support services (eg technology-enhanced learning, IT, MIS, careers, employability) can use the toolkit to review and enhance support for programme teams.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Easy-to-use quality resources</b></p>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The toolkit is built around sector good practice in designing and delivering flexible curricula and provides links to sector information, guidance, reports and case studies.</li> <li>• Resources are simple to use.</li> <li>• All resources are free, reusable and e-versions are provided to allow customisation to local needs and contexts.</li> </ul>  |

## 2.6 Background to developing the “Drivers and Needs” cards

The traditional view of flexible curricula that centred on differences between full and part-time study is increasingly being challenged and blurred in a rapidly changing HE landscape where:

- a difficult economic climate forces many learners to find ways to balance study with work, family and travel commitments;
- Government seeks to drive forward key HE agendas such as widening participation, increasing numbers engaging in HE, facilitating ease of progression from vocational study, educational partnerships, educational innovation and addressing threats and opportunities arising from the globalisation of higher education;
- an increasing demand from learners and employers for HE study to prepare learners for employment eg via work-related learning;
- learners have greater expectations for their HE experience, including study that is personalised to individual needs and includes mature use of technology-enhanced learning;
- an increasing trend for learners wanting to be pro-active in shaping their educational experience;
- exponentially increasing access to knowledge, information, ideas, learning materials, learning communities via the Internet as well as low-cost Internet-enabled mobile devices that all mean that learners demand far more from an HE education than content delivered in traditional ways such as lectures.

HE institutions therefore have to meet increasing learner demands and expectations to provide choice, flexibility and personalisation to individual learning, study and assessment needs. This cannot be achieved through the traditional concept of part-time study or by simply using technology to replicate existing learning models: it requires a more fundamental approach to re-examine and develop new cost-effective learning pedagogies that can provide appropriate flexibility and personalisation which can take advantage of the learning, knowledge-building, communications and information-sharing opportunities afforded within the digital world.

## 2.7 Background to developing the “Practice Points” cards

The QAA in Scotland sponsored a key report by John Casey and Pam Wilson '[A practical guide to providing flexible learning in further and higher education](#)' (2005) as part of its [Flexible Curricula Enhancement Theme programme](#) where they developed the concept of the Flexible Continuum which was used to underpin this practical toolkit. Since then, considerable innovation and change initiatives relating to flexible curricula have been undertaken by a range of institutions, supported and funded by educational agencies including the QAA, Jisc and the Higher Education Academy. The Flexible Curriculum toolkit has aimed to draw out effective practice from all these initiatives and associated evaluations and evidence reports and has developed practice points around four key themes:

- External engagement and partnerships
- Anytime, anywhere learning
- Entry, transition, progression and exit

- Learning model, personalisation and learner engagement
- **External engagement and partnerships**

This dimension of practice recognises increasing learner and employer-related demands ranging from preparing learners for employment through eg work-related learning to providing totally work-based learning where the employer can benefit through eg enhancing workforce skills, organisational entrepreneurship and innovation. The practice points reinforce Government drivers for increasing collaboration and partnerships between HE providers, employers (including professional, employer and sector bodies) and other educational providers and emphasise that such collaborations need to be based on true partnership approaches as opposed to token consultative exercises.
- **Anytime, anywhere learning**

This dimension of practice builds on the “any time, any place” concept of flexible learning providing the potential to make this a true reality (eg learning on campus, at home, in the work-place, whilst travelling). The use of technology-enhanced learning (eg accessed through desktop and laptop computers) can provide learners, tutors and other stakeholders (eg employers, mentors, experts, assessors) with the flexibility to “time-shift” and synchronous technologies such as web-conferencing can provide eg virtual classrooms and tutorials. Furthermore, the use of Internet-connected mobile devices can underpin active learning and assessment models that engage learners, tutors and employers in synchronous and live interaction (as opposed to passive learning) eg in the work-place and practice settings. However, to fulfil the promise of truly mobile learning, a whole range of information, support and guidance services need to be put in place to ensure that learners are all equipped with the tools, resources, expertise, confidence and knowledge to fully embrace the world of digital learning.
- **Entry, transition, progression and exit**

This dimension of practice recognises the need for a flexible learner journey, starting from increased choice in how learners gain entry to a programme (eg having prior experiential or certificated learning recognised to allow them to enter with advanced standing), when they commence a programme (also to suit employer needs), how they are prepared for HE study, choice in learning pathways including negotiating curricula to suit individual/employer needs and the pace of the programme (eg accelerated or decelerated curricula). The provision of effective support for progression must underpin such flexibility eg with up-to-date holistic data on learner progress and support processes in place to recognise and support learners facing difficulties. The programme also needs to prepare learners for working and learning in employment through development of graduate attributes, employability skills and digital literacy.
- **Learning model, personalisation and learner engagement**

This dimension of practice recognises that provision of cost-effective flexible curricula to provide any time, any place study requires programme teams to re-examine learning models with a view to creating more active, interactive, engaging, collaborative and authentic learning activities that take advantage of technology-enhanced learning techniques and resources – all of which provide the potential to enhance learning personalisation and ultimately to create self-directed/autonomous/life-long learners who are also capable of self-assessment/review. It could be argued that for “ultimate” flexibility, HE providers could focus on the concept of “the flexible learner” – one who is equipped for life-long learning and can adapt their self-directed learning

and review to whatever contexts, opportunities and constraints that they find themselves in. This dimension of practice also recognises that the concept of flexible provision is a dynamic one, particularly with ever-changing TEL approaches, and therefore more innovative, agile, flexible and cost-effective approaches to programme design, development, review, validation and delivery need to be embraced in order to be more responsive to learner and employer needs. A key area of current innovative practice is for institutions and programme teams to engage students as partners, researchers and change agents in such educational innovation.

### 3 The Flexible Curriculum toolkit

#### 3.1 Who can use the toolkit?

This handbook will be useful to anyone who is involved in educational programme design and the student learner experience and journey – from designing pedagogic approaches, planning learning/assessment activities, use of technology-enhanced learning approaches to reviewing and enhancing programmes, creating new programmes and preparing for revalidation.

Educational staff (and students) who could benefit from using these materials include:

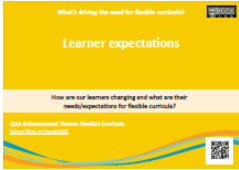
- Programme directors
- Module coordinators / leaders
- Subject teams
- Professional support staff
- Teaching staff and their students
- Subject librarians and information officers
- Students' Union groups/representatives

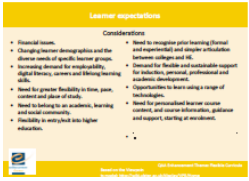
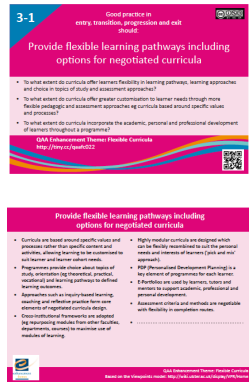

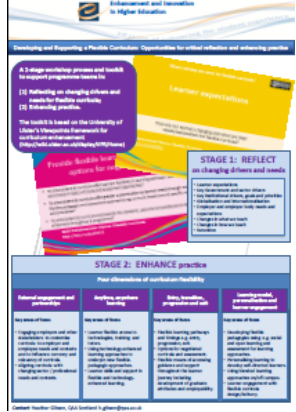
It can also be used by a broader range of institutional staff eg

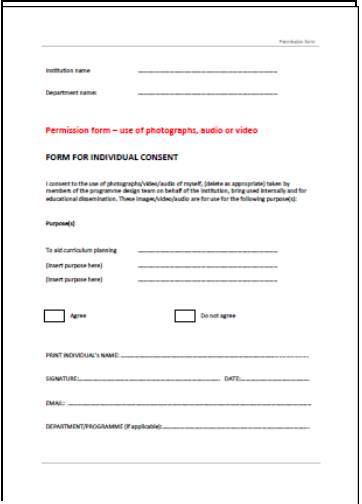


- ICT/MIS staff – to enable them to review their policies and support to programme teams.
- Senior managers – to help them to review their strategies, policies and plans in relation to the student experience/journey and learning, teaching and assessment.
- Staff involved with student careers planning and graduate skills/attributes eg employability skills, digital literacies.
- Staff developers eg those designing staff CPD programmes and professional accreditation.
- Staff responsible for recruitment and retention, employer engagement and business and community development.

#### 3.2 Toolkit resources

The toolkit contains the following resources:

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>A set of cards – Drivers and Needs</b></p> | <p>A set of cards around the following seven themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student needs and expectations</li> <li>• Key Government drivers</li> <li>• Key institutional drivers, goals and priorities</li> <li>• Globalisation and internationalisation</li> </ul> |  |
|--|--|---|

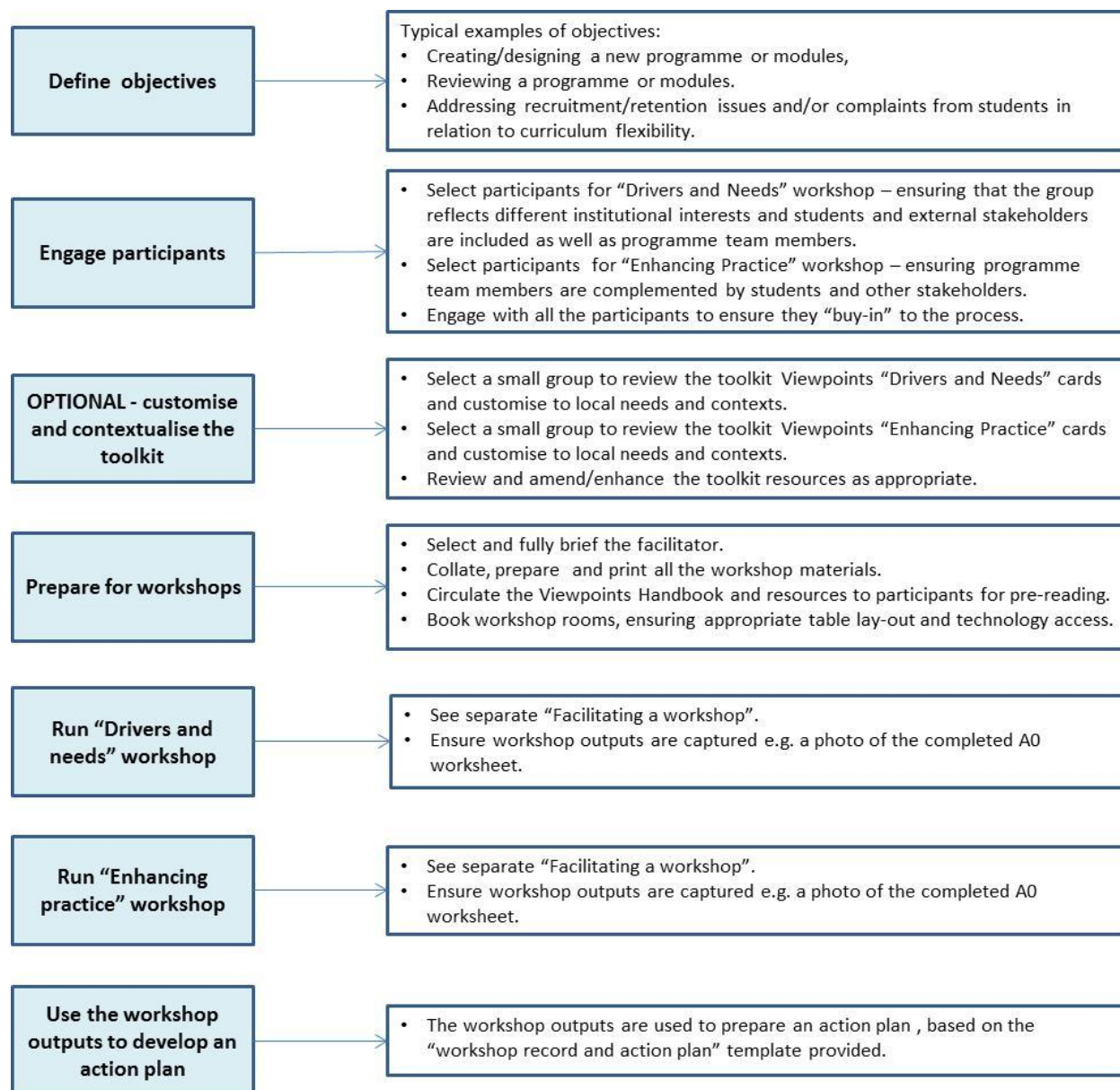
|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employer and employer body needs and expectations</li> <li>• Changes in what and how we teach</li> <li>• Recruitment and retention</li> </ul> <p>These are available as printed cards. They are also available in e-versions – as four separate MS PowerPoint files, which may be customised.</p>   |    |
| <p><b>A set of cards – Practice points</b></p> | <p>A set of cards around the following four key dimensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External engagement and partnerships</li> <li>• Anytime, anywhere learning</li> <li>• Entry, transition, progression and exit</li> <li>• Learning model, personalisation and learner engagement</li> </ul> <p>Each dimension has between five and nine practice points.</p> <p>These are available as printed cards. They are also available in e-versions – as four separate MS PowerPoint files, which may be customised.</p> |    |
| <p><b>A0 worksheet</b></p>                     | <p>A0 worksheet – on which toolkit cards are placed. The same worksheet template can be used for both stages.</p> <p>This is available as a printed sheet or in 3-format, as a PowerPoint file.</p>  |   |
| <p><b>This handbook</b></p>                    | <p>This handbook contains all the information needed to use the toolkit.</p>   |   |
| <p><b>Hand-out</b></p>                         | <p>The hand-out can be used for dissemination to interested stakeholders to provide an overview of the toolkit and workshop process.</p> <p>It comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overview</li> <li>• The key practice points</li> <li>• One-page crib-sheet to show the workshop process for reflecting on changing drivers and needs.</li> <li>• One-page crib-sheet to show the workshop process for enhancing practice.</li> </ul>   |  |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>Sample permission form</b></p>                   | <p>A permission form that can be contextualised – to be signed by workshop participants in order to provide consent and permissions to use recordings such as photos and video.</p>   |    |
| <p><b>Online resources</b></p>                         | <p>A set of online resources (<a href="http://tiny.cc/qaafc001">http://tiny.cc/qaafc001</a>) to complement the Viewpoints cards, encompassing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A separate web-page for each “Drivers and Needs” card including links to further information, guidance and resources.</li> <li>• A separate web-page for each “Practice Point” card including links to further information, guidance, case studies, reports and other resources.</li> <li>• An e-version of this handbook.</li> <li>• All toolkit resources in e-format.</li> </ul> |   |
| <p><b>Workshop record and action plan template</b></p> | <p>A template that can be used to record and type up notes based on the AO worksheets completed by the groups (MS Word format) and then to follow up the workshops with action planning.</p>  |  |

All the resources can be downloaded from <http://tiny.cc/qaafc001>.



### 3.3 Flow diagram for using the toolkit



### 3.4 Customising the toolkit resources

The above flow diagram provides for an optional stage of contextualising the resources for local contexts and needs eg

- Customising terminology
- Customising by aligning the resources with local activities and initiatives

- Reflecting on the cards and enhancing them with in-house experience and knowledge.
- Adapting the recommended processes to suit local needs.

All resources are available in e-format in either MS Word or PowerPoint and these can be edited and printed.

It is recommended that the cards are printed in colour and, ideally, they should then be laminated.

As a simple option, personalised A0 worksheets could be made using flipchart pages.

## 4 Running workshops

### 4.1 Role of the facilitator

The facilitator leads the workshop. They should help the group to discuss their objectives effectively, and help them to plan, using the workshop materials.

As a facilitator you will need to do the following:

- Introduce the session.
- Keep an eye on the time (moving people on to the next task if they are spending too long on one part of the workshop). However, be flexible. You don't want to stop valuable contributions.
- Try to encourage all group members to contribute.
- Keep participants focused.
- Use the "Facilitating workshops" guides (below) to remind you of what you need to do during the workshop.

### 4.2 Facilitating the "Drivers and Needs" workshop

**Time required:** Approximately 2 hours

| Activity  | Instructions   | Time    |
|---|--|---------|
| <b>Workshop introduction</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the Viewpoints framework and explain the rationale for adopting it.</li> <li>• Introduce the toolkit tools and resources and how they are going to be used.</li> </ul>  | 10 mins |
| <b>Session outline</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the workshop tasks one by one.</li> <li>• Tell the group what they will be doing at each stage.</li> </ul>  | 5 mins  |
| <b>Task 1<br/>Agree objective</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and agree the overall objective.</li> <li>• Record the objective on the A0 worksheet.</li> </ul>   | 10 mins |
| <b>Task 2<br/>Consider the seven key themes</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute the "Drivers and Needs" cards and allow the group to read these.</li> <li>• <i>Tip: You can divide the overall group into sub-groups to address specific cards. Ideally a group/sub-group should include approximately 5-6 participants.</i></li> <li>• The group discuss the cards and the relevance to their overall objective and decides whether to use all seven cards or eliminate some, if not appropriate to the overall objective.</li> <li>• The group continues the discussions and are asked to place the selected cards (front-up) on the A0 worksheet and assign an overall priority to each card (they may change this</li> </ul> | 60 mins |

| Activity  | Instructions  | Time    |
|---|---|---------|
|   | <p>as the workshop progresses).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cards can then be turned over and the group continues to discuss the “considerations” (on the rear of the cards).</li> <li>• The group are asked to prioritise (or cross off) each consideration.</li> <li>• Additional considerations can also be added by the group.</li> </ul>              |         |
| <b>Task 3</b><br><b>Writing a commentary</b>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group are then tasked to write a commentary on the A0 worksheet to elaborate on each card eg why the selected considerations are important and how they will impact the overall objective. Post-it notes can also be used.</li> </ul>  | 20 mins |
| <b>Task 4</b><br><b>Capture the workshop and write up key conclusions</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cards should be attached using blue-tak.</li> <li>• The worksheet should be captured/saved eg using a digital camera, ensuring that all text can be easily read.</li> <li>• The key conclusions should be written up using the workshop output template which should be disseminated to all participants in both workshops.</li> </ul> | 15 mins |

### 4.3 Facilitating the “Enhancing Practice” workshop

**Time required:** Approximately 2.5 hours

| Activity   | Instructions   | Time    |
|--|--|---------|
| <b>Workshop introduction</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the Viewpoints framework and explain the rationale for adopting it.</li> <li>• Introduce the toolkit tools and resources and how they are going to be used.</li> </ul>  | 10 mins |
| <b>Session outline</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the workshop tasks one by one.</li> <li>• Tell the group what they will be doing at each stage.</li> </ul>  | 5 mins  |
| <b>Task 1</b><br><b>Review objective and conclusions from the “Drivers and Needs” workshop</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the overall objective and record it on the A0 worksheet.</li> <li>• Review conclusions from the “Drivers and Needs” workshop and ensure that these are displayed throughout the workshop for all participants to see eg on the original A0 worksheet and/or a summary A4 print-out for each participant.</li> </ul>  | 10 mins |
| <b>Task 2</b><br><b>Select which of the four dimensions of flexibility to consider</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute the “Practice points” cards (for all four dimensions of flexibility) and allow the group to read these.</li> <li>• The group discuss the cards and the relevance to their overall objective and drivers and needs and decides which of the four dimensions to focus on.</li> <li>• <i>Tip: You can divide the overall group into sub-groups to address specific dimensions and/or cards. Ideally a group/sub-group should include approximately 5-6 participants.</i></li> <li>• The cards for those dimensions not selected are set aside.</li> </ul> | 10 mins |

| Activity   | Instructions   | Time    |
|--|--|---------|
| <b>Task 3</b><br><b>Select which practice points to focus on</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The group continues the discussions on the selected dimensions of flexibility and are asked to choose which practice point cards to focus on.</li> <li>Those practice points cards not selected are set aside.</li> <li>The group are then asked to place the selected cards (front-up) on the A0 worksheet and assign an overall priority to each card (they may change this as the workshop progresses).</li> </ul> | 15mins  |
| <b>Task 4</b><br><b>Consider the practice points</b>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cards can then be turned over and the group continues to discuss the detailed practice points (on the rear of the cards).</li> <li>The group are asked to prioritise (or cross off) each detailed practice point based on relevancy to the overall objective and identified drivers and needs.</li> <li>Additional practice points can also be added by the group.</li> </ul>                                     | 60mins  |
| <b>Task 5</b><br><b>Writing a commentary</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The group are then tasked to write a commentary on the A0 worksheet to elaborate on each card eg why the selected practice points are important and how they will impact the overall objective. Post-it notes can also be used.</li> <li>The A0 worksheet should then be reviewed within the context of the overall objective and the identified drivers and needs and updated if needed.</li> </ul>                  | 25 mins |
| <b>Task 6</b><br><b>Capture the workshop, write up key conclusions and develop a plan.</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cards should be attached using blue-tak.</li> <li>The worksheet should be captured/saved eg using a digital camera, ensuring that all text can be easily read.</li> <li>The key conclusions should be written up and developed into a plan using the workshop “Record and Action Plan” template.</li> </ul>   | 15 mins |

#### 4.4 Tips for preparing for the workshops

- **Preparing resources**
  - Select and fully brief the facilitator.
  - Collate, prepare and print all the workshop materials.
  - Book workshop rooms, ensuring appropriate table lay-out and technology access.
  - Ensure there are sufficient writing implements, post-it notes and blue-tak.
- **Engaging participants**
  - Select participants for “Drivers and Needs” workshop – ensuring that the group reflect different institutional interests and students and external stakeholders are included as well as programme team members.
  - Select participants for “Enhancing Practice” workshop – ensuring programme team members are complemented by students and other stakeholders.
  - Engage with all the participants to ensure they “buy-in” to the process.
  - Suggest to participants that they may benefit from bringing their mobile devices which should ideally include facilities to read QR codes.

- Share the resources with participants before the workshops eg Viewpoints cards and/or this handbook.
- **Preparing the workshop room**
  - Book your room (based on the number of attendees) and check out size and layout beforehand.
  - Check that the room table is appropriate for the number of participants and the A0 worksheet.
  - Test any technology that you may want to use.

#### **4.5 Audio-visual recordings**

If possible, you could photograph the workshop sessions at different stages of the process, and video the final workshop task, when one or two members from the group briefly feedback on their progress. However, this is not essential.

If you are capturing photos or videos of your groups, it's important to make sure that all participants have read, understood and signed an image permission form. Do NOT use images of any staff member who has not consented to use of their image.

#### **4.6 Hints and tips**

Here are some useful tips that may help facilitators when delivering workshops.

These tips have come from the original Viewpoints workshop team and their own extensive experience of planning and delivering programme design workshops, so they are based on real-world examples.

1. Emphasise the fact that the cards are only prompts. They are there as guides to help in the discussions.
2. Identify the objective beforehand, if possible. This will free up time for detailed discussion and tailored planning.
3. Distribute copies of the cards to groups beforehand, so that they are familiar with the themes and ideas before the workshop - this can help prevent information overload.
4. Let participants know that there are no right/wrong answers, and encourage them to record any of their own ideas not listed.
5. Students can work well within the Viewpoints process as it is so learner-focused – and can provide valuable input and a fresh perspective to group discussions.
6. Timings given for the workshops are only suggestions. They are best used as a guide to keep the workshop on schedule.
7. Make use of written and photographed outputs in your planning. Don't have a good creative discussion and then forget to record anything. Essential information may be lost!
8. If you're recording photos or videos of your session, be sure to get ALL participants to complete the image permission sheet. Go to each participant individually to collect their completed

permission sheets, so you can identify which members have not consented to their image being used.

9. Don't schedule workshops for a Friday afternoon – participants will most likely be tired and demotivated!
10. Providing refreshments (such as tea, coffee and scones or sandwiches) will help motivate your participants to complete the intensive workshop process.

## 5 Action planning

A “Workshop record and action plan” MS Word template is provided as part of the Viewpoints toolkit to help you to:

- Write-up a record of the two workshops
- Develop an action plan

The action plan encourages you to:

- Plan actions for each practice point that you focus on.
- Prioritise the actions.
- Assign responsibilities to each action.
- Provide an outline time-plan for each action.

The Viewpoints for Flexible Curricula web-site (<http://tiny.cc/qaafc001>) provides further resources eg

- Links to flexible curricula resources provided by the QAA, HEA, Jisc, HEFCE and HEFCW.
- Case studies relating to flexible curricula.



## 6 Practice points for flexible curricula

The practice points for flexible curricula are as follows:

| 1<br>External engagement<br>and partnerships  | 2<br>Anytime, anywhere<br>learning   | 3<br>Entry, transition,<br>progression and exit   | 4<br>Learning model,<br>personalisation<br>and student engagement   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>1-1. Engage employers with design and delivery.</p> <p>1-2. Align curricula with employer and learner needs.</p> <p>1-3. Align curricula with sector/employer body needs and initiatives.</p> <p>1-4. Align curricula with professional, regional, national, sector, international standards and changing contexts.</p> <p>1-5. Engage other educational providers and stakeholders with curriculum design and delivery.</p> | <p>2-1. Ensure minimum equitable off-campus access to technologies for all learners.</p> <p>2-2. Provide access to a broad range of on-campus technology enhanced learning tools for learners and staff.</p> <p>2-3. Design curricula with a significant focus on technology-enhanced learning (TEL).</p> <p>2-4. Design curricula specifically to exploit mobile technologies such as Tablets, SmartPhones, e-book readers, and multimedia devices.</p> <p>2-5. Ensure a high degree of digital literacy (DL) amongst learners.</p> <p>2-6. Provide 24-hour access to information, learning resources and support.</p> <p>2-7. Provide flexible access to tutors, peers, mentors, experts, assessors and other relevant stakeholders involved with curricula delivery.</p> <p>2-8. Provide specific learner guidance and support for flexible learning.</p> | <p>3-1. Provide flexible learning pathways including options for negotiated curricula.</p> <p>3-2. Provide flexible learning pathways including options for negotiated curricula - additional considerations relating to work-based learning contexts.</p> <p>3-3. Provide flexibility in programme timing and progression.</p> <p>3-4. Provide flexible learning pathways through RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning), articulation and credit transfer.</p> <p>3-5. Provide pre-entry information and guidance.</p> <p>3-6. Provide pre-entry support.</p> <p>3-7. Provide integrated flexible induction.</p> <p>3-8. Provide effective support for learner progression and retention.</p> <p>3-9. Develop graduate attributes and employability skills to prepare learners for working and learning in employment.</p> | <p>4-1. Provide flexibility in campus-based teaching via technology-enhanced learning (TEL) techniques.</p> <p>4-2. Personalise learning activities with an aim to create autonomous self-directed learners.</p> <p>4-3. Design social and informal learning activities which exploit online media and support a range of pedagogies.</p> <p>4-4. Adopt open approaches to exploit the knowledge and experience of others and facilitate learner choice.</p> <p>4-5. Design curricula to emphasise assessment for learning to develop learners capable of self-review.</p> <p>4-6. Continually engage in educational innovation, change and research in flexible curricula as part of quality enhancement and assurance.</p> <p>4-7. Adopt flexible, transparent and business-like approaches to programme design, development, review and validation.</p> <p>4-8. Implement protocols of engagement for learners and tutors to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, codes and policies.</p> |