NU Learning and Teaching Toolkit #3

Course Design

I. Analyze

Before designing a course, you may wish to consider:

- the **Bologna Cycle** and **EQF level** descriptors of the program, a part of which is the actual course;
- the prior knowledge and skills of potential students;
- how this course will contribute to the achievement of the program aims (PAs), and the delivery of program learning outcomes (PLOs) and NU Graduate Attributes (GAs);
- the course type (core or elective).

II. Design

How might you start? Diagram 1 reflects the order of the course development process:
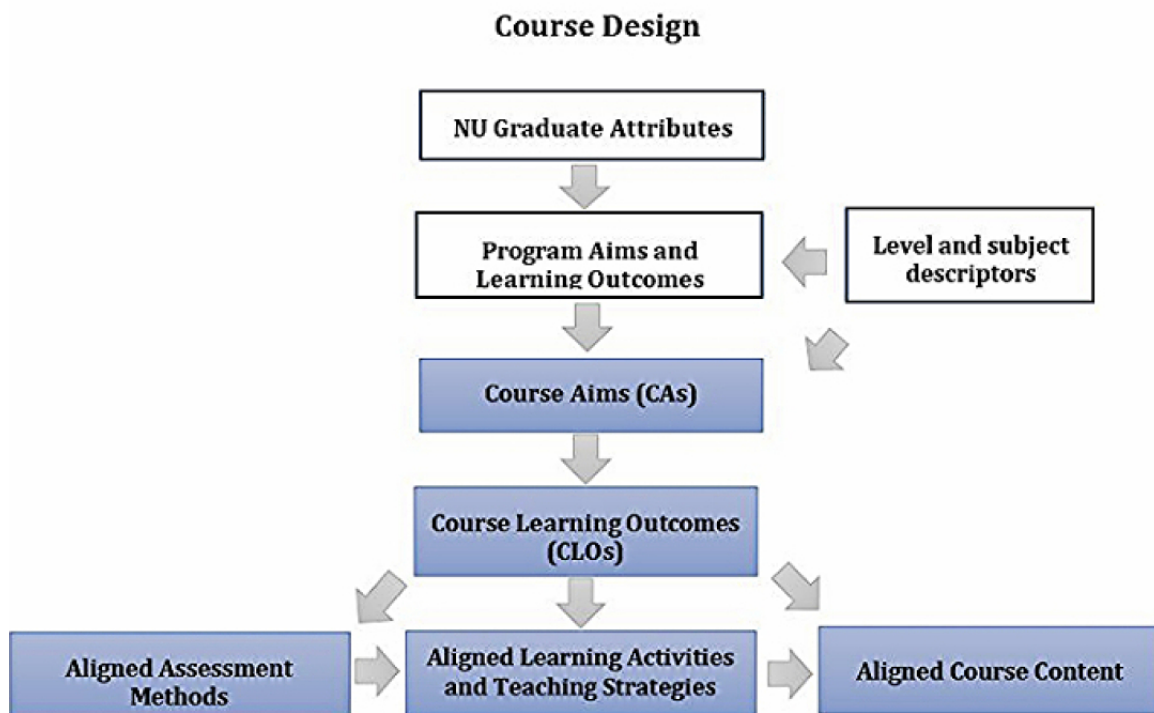
Course Design

The official course design elements are listed in the NU Course Specification Form.

7 Steps to Designing a Course

Step 1. Develop the Course Aims (CAs)

Course Aims represent the instructor's overarching intentions in a course and:

- are typically two to four in number;
- may outline career/study opportunities;
- are congruent with the program aims (PAs), PLOs, which are aligned with the **NU Graduate Attributes** (Pic. 1)
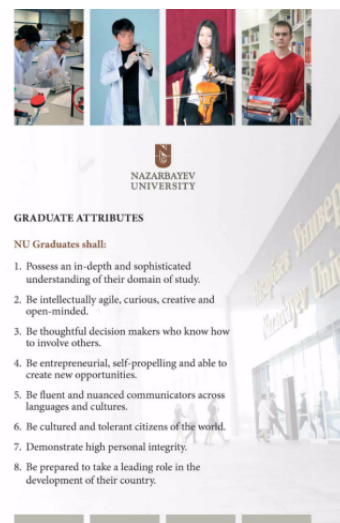
Step 2. Develop Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

CLOs are statements that describe the knowledge, skills, and attributes that students will demonstrate upon **successful** completion of the course (Diagram 2).

You may look at some examples of transferable skills used in the University of Cambridge.

How can we phrase the LOs?

You may use the following expression: "At the end of this course, successful students **will be able to...**"
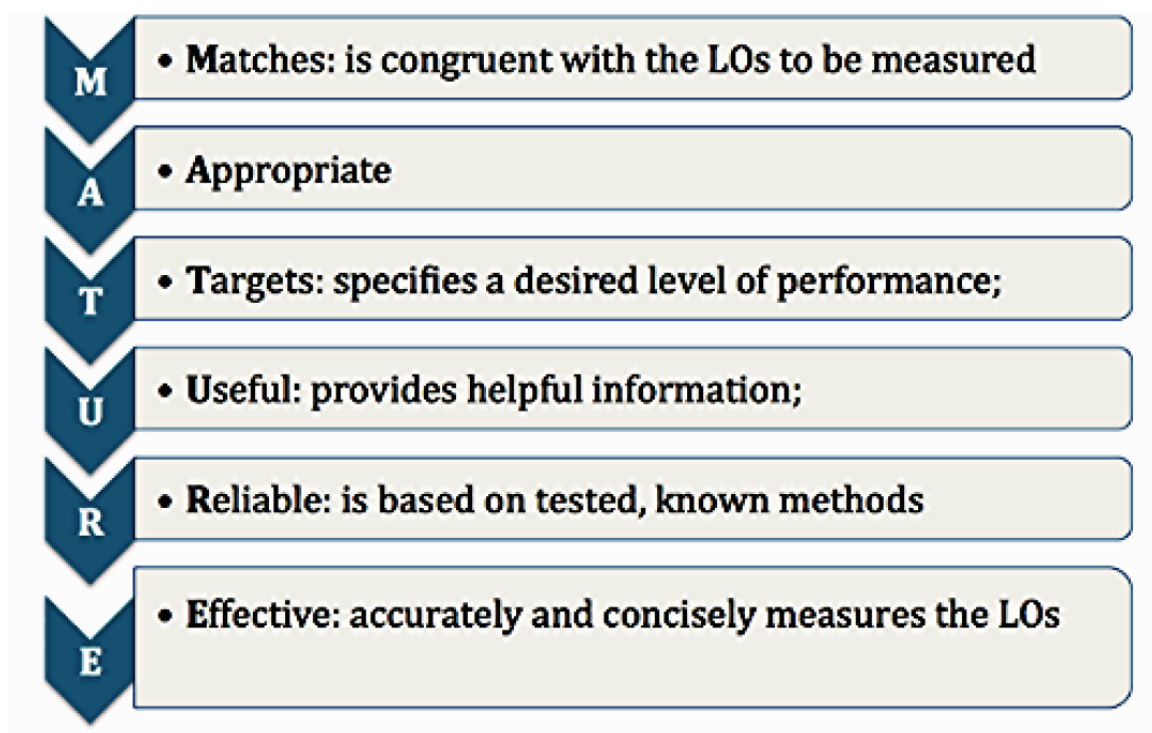
- start with action verbs (consider Anderson and Krathwohl's taxonomy as an example);
- be specific, precise, and unambiguous;
- not be complex or compound;
- be achievable and measurable;
- be appropriate to the level of study (Bologna Cycle; EQF levels);
- be benchmarked for content (subject descriptors, requirements of the accrediting/professional bodies);
- reflect the complexity of the course to reveal students' progress through the program.
- be aligned with the CAs and PLOs.

Step 3. Design Assessment Methods (AMs)

After considering the PLOs to which your course contributes, you may design AMs that

- adhere to the principles of explicitness, validity, and reliability of assessment procedures (NU Assessment Strategy);
- are **MATURE** (Diagram3). Review if an AM:

- **M** • Matches: is congruent with the LOs to be measured
- **A** • Appropriate
- **T** • Targets: specifies a desired level of performance;
- **U** • Useful: provides helpful information;
- **R** • Reliable: is based on tested, known methods
- **E** • Effective: accurately and concisely measures the LOs

Read more about LOs assessment in our [NU Learning and Teaching Toolkit#2](#)

> "In a constructively aligned course, learning outcomes, learning experiences, and assessment methods work together to ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes" (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Step 4. Develop Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

Design TLAs that:

- support the achievement of the CLOs and students' progress throughout the program;
- are aligned with the AMs;
- employ various innovative teaching methods and interactive learning activities ([NU Teaching and Learning Strategy](#));
- cultivate the implementation of the NU Quality Enhancement Theme - Research-Integrated Teaching (Read the [NU Learning and Teaching Toolkit #1](#));
- consider student workload and the number of ECTS credits allocated to the course. ([ECTS user's guide 2015](#))

To introduce modern technology-enhanced teaching and learning methods, you may consult with the Innovative Learning Lead (Dr. Scholl) or participate in the PD sessions provided by Advance HE (UK). Please contact your HR manager and the Office of the Provost for more details.

Step 5. Compile the Course Content

In bringing all the themes under one course umbrella, you may consider the following:

- the international context (requirements of accrediting/professional bodies, subject descriptors);
- the national context (include, as appropriate, cases associated with Kazakhstan);
- the institutional context (NU's Mission and Strategy);
- the school context (School's mission);
- the research context.

Wosick-Correa, K. (2008) The Teaching, Learning and Technology Center, University of

California, Irvine.

Step 6. Plan Course Delivery

Identify resources available for effective course delivery (e.g., information technology, interactive digital materials, library resources, laboratory equipment).

Give students essential information on the course specifications, schedule, and learner support resources. Include course policy statements regarding academic integrity, class attendance, and deadlines into the course documentation.

Step 7. Annual Course Monitoring and Modifications

You may reflect on the grade distribution results, student feedback, and instruction in relation to the attainment of CLOs, as part of the annual review of education delivery (for more details read the APM policy and use the approved template).

If you are planning to introduce some changes, follow the Guidelines for modifications to programs and courses.

Useful links

Previous issues

Toolkit#1

Toolkit#2

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