



# PROGRAMME DESIGN & ASSESSMENT

---

The Programme Design Dialogue Tool

---

Authors: Geraldine O'Neill and Diane Cashman

Email: [geraldine.m.oneill@ucd.ie](mailto:geraldine.m.oneill@ucd.ie), [diane.cashman@ucd.ie](mailto:diane.cashman@ucd.ie)

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017

**Recommended citation (revised)** O'Neill, G. Cashman, D. (2017). *The Programme Design Dialogue Tool: A Programme and Module Review Tool For Online, Blended and Face-to-Face Contexts*, UCD Teaching & Learning, Dublin, Ireland.

#### **Author contact details**

Dr. Geraldine O'Neill. [geraldine.m.oneill@ucd.ie](mailto:geraldine.m.oneill@ucd.ie), twitter: @gmoneill2  
[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Geraldine\\_Oneill](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Geraldine_Oneill)

Diane Cashman, [diane.cashman@ucd.ie](mailto:diane.cashman@ucd.ie)

#### **Copyright**

*The Programme Design Dialogue Tool* by Geraldine O'Neill & Diane Cashman is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

## ***The Programme Design Dialogue Tool:*** **A Programme and Module Review Tool** **For Online, Blended and Face-to-Face contexts**

### *What is the tool?*

Based on the need for an Irish tool to assist in the design and enhancement of online and blended programmes, the *Programme Design Dialogue Tool* (originally titled the *Programme and Module Review Tool For Online, Blended and Face-to-Face contexts*) was instigated as part of a UCD Teaching & Learning project (UCD Teaching & Learning, 2014; O’Neill & Cashman, 2015a). It is intended to encourage staff to self and peer review their programmes and/or modules for **enhancement** purposes. It is proposed as a tool for use by academic staff, educational technologists, academic/educational developers, senior management staff and all those involved in supporting teaching and learning development.

The tool is divided into two sections, one focusing at programme and one for module enhancement level. These sections can be used separately or in conjunction with each other. They are further divided into categories (see Table 1) that represent the areas that are commonly used internationally in the design of modules and programmes (Shelton, 2010; Gibson & Dunning, 2013).

*Table 1: The Categories*

<b>Programme Design Categories</b>	<b>Module Design Categories.</b>
Programme Philosophy and models	Module Learning Outcomes
Programme Context	Module Assessment and Feedback
Programme Outcomes	Module Interaction
Programme Organisation and Structure	Module Learner Support
Programme Teaching and Learning Strategies	Module Learning Materials
Programme Assessment & Feedback Strategies	User Experience in the Module
Programme Evaluation	Module Evaluation
Programme Support	

The tool should assist in either the review of the early design or at post implementation stages. Although the tool was originally intended for use with online and blended programmes, as it developed it became apparent that it also was transferrable for use in face-to-face programme review (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009; O’Neill, 2015).

### *Why would I use it?*

1. To enhance your awareness of good programme and module design, based on a series of statements developed by expertise in the Irish higher education sector
2. To facilitate you in the self and peer review of these statements against your own programme and/or module activities
3. To assist in re-affirming the areas you are doing well in and sharing these with colleagues

# UCD TEACHING AND LEARNING/RESOURCES

4. To foster dialogue with your colleagues on ideas to enhance the programme/modules
5. To assist in prioritizing your actions in some of these areas
6. To assist in the self or peer review of any enhancement changes made.

The process developed as part of the tool may require time and energies and you may consider doing this as part of quality enhancement activities already in action. Alternatively there may be areas you would like to get some quick gains on. It is a tool to help you in whatever way is useful in your context.

## *How was it developed?*

Following an extensive exploration of the literature and similar international tools (O'Neill & Cashman, 2015a), a two-stage research study was carried to develop the tool. The first stage of the study (based on Whiting et al, 2003) engaged 18 experts across Irish higher education institutions to develop the conceptual aspect and the initial item generation. As a result, 100 programme and 80 module design statements were created. These experts highlighted the importance of using the tool in an *enhancement* process incorporating 'collegial' self and peer review dialogue (O'Neill & Cashman, 2015b).

Stage 2 of the study used a two-round Delphi methodology in order to gain further consensus on the extent to which these statements should be included in the tool, drawing from a wider expert group in Irish higher education. There was a separate sample used for the programme design (n= 53; n=30) and the module design (n= 17; n= 24) statements. Based on a series of data analysis steps, the statements numbers were reduced. For example, as a starting point statements below 80% agreement were discarded (Holey et al, 2007). The statements were reduced to the current 48 programme design and 31 module design statements (Version 1) (O'Neill & Cashman, 2016).

## *How do I use it?*

At the start of each section there is a suggested process to use with your module and/or your programme, but feel free to use it as best suits your requirements.

## *How do I give feedback on this new tool?*

As this tool is recently designed and is now in a pilot phase of this UCD research study, we would value any feedback on your experiences using this process and your view on the validity of the statements in the tool.

To partake in this aspect of the research please go to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DHZW9ZM>

## **Section 1: Programme Review and Enhancement**

In order to ensure that there is a coherent approach to the enhancement of your programme, any conversation around improvements to your programme are best done as a team. The team should include the variety of stakeholders, including the key staff (i.e. academic staff, educational technologist/developers, librarians,) current and past students, employers, clinicians, etc..

Given the importance of a team approach to this, the following are suggested steps to use the tool:

1. **Self-Assess.** To gather your own thoughts, initially individually self-assess against the programme statements prior to a Programme Team meeting.
2. **Consolidate the team's consensus** of the ratings of the statements, in, for example, a Programme Team Meeting or by email
3. **Gather further information and revise** to answer any outstanding questions (i.e. student feedback, programme documents). This could be any additional module data, including the use the module self-assessment section of this tool. Revise the Programme Team assessment.
4. **Programme Team Conversation.** At this point it is useful to have peer conversations on the findings of your Programme Team assessment, for the purposes of discussing enhancement. Develop some initial ideas for action with your colleagues.
5. **Create some Actions:** Prioritise some key actions for the programme
6. **Implement ideas:** Carry out any actions that are manageable within the time and resource constraints of the programme
7. **Re-evaluate** using the tool after an appropriate time scale.



## Scoring the Statements.

# UCD TEACHING AND LEARNING/RESOURCES

Having read the statement, tick the description that best represents your programme at this point in time.

**Exemplary (E)**

You consider this to be good practice in your context and would be willing to share it as a good example to others.

**Achieved (A)**

You consider you have met the expectations around this statement, for your context. Further work could make it exemplary

**Further Development Needed (FD)**

You are aware that you have not met and/or that work needs to be done in this area, but resources may have inhibited you in achieving this, i.e. time, financial, staffing. You may not have full control over its implementation at this point in time, but further work is required.

**Significant Development Needed (SD)**

No attention has been given to this area. There may be lack of awareness of its importance. Significant work is required.

**N/A:** This statement is not applicable for this programme.

	Programme Categories and Statements						
	Programme Philosophy and models	E	A	FD	SD	NA	Comment

# UCD TEACHING AND LEARNING/RESOURCES

1.	Educational values/philosophy of the programme are identified and transparent to students						
2.	Active student participation in learning is at the heart of the programme philosophy						
3.	The curriculum model(s) indicated reflect the teaching, learning and assessment activities structured into the programme.						
	<b>Programme Context</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>FD</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comment</b>
4.	The programme design has considered the needs of the programme for society and the university						
5.	Programme design has considered the learner group and the nature of the learning						
6.	The programme is supported by senior staff/management and has commensurate resources provided to it						
	<b>Programme Outcomes</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>FD</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comment</b>
7.	The programme outcomes are clear and transparent for the students.						
8.	The module outcomes can be mapped to programme learning outcomes						
9.	The programme outcomes reflect the discipline and generic attributes that students require for their future careers, i.e. critical thinking skills						
10.	The programme's outcomes align with the programme's educational philosophy						
11.	The alignment between the programme outcomes, teaching, learning strategies and assessment strategies are clear.						
12.	The programme outcomes are consistent with the requirements of relevant professional bodies and statutory regulatory bodies						
13.	The programme outcomes are written at the correct level for the programme. i.e. undergraduate or postgraduate.						
14.	The programme outcomes prioritize the key attributes that the students should achieve from the programme						
	<b>Programme Organisation and Structure</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>FD</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comment</b>
15.	The coherence and balance of the programme have been considered i.e. the sequence of modules/how modules connect/how parallel module are delivered/assessed						
16.	Programme structure is clearly evident to students (articulated verbally, presented visually or both)						
17.	The links/connections between modules are clear to the students						
	<b>Programme Teaching and Learning Strategies</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>FD</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comment</b>
18.	The teaching and learning strategies emphasize the active learning strategies required for students to become autonomous learners.						
19.	There are multiple opportunities for students to interact with each other throughout the programme.						
20.	The pace of learning and workload of students is considered across the programme, e.g. group activities and assessment taking place in modules simultaneously						
21.	Teaching and learning strategies check for and assure student inclusivity						
22.	Teaching and learning strategies are culturally inclusive, encouraging students to engage positively with their peers on the cohort and to value diversity						
23.	Provide learning materials in different formats (written, online, audio, video podcast etc.) to support key concepts/knowledge.						
24.	Teaching and learning strategies have a blend of co-operative learning and direct instruction strategies						

# UCD TEACHING AND LEARNING/RESOURCES

25.	Programme Teaching and learning strategies makes appropriate use of teaching technologies						
26.	Teaching and learning strategies allow for critical and creative thinking opportunities						
	<b>Programme Assessment &amp; Feedback Strategies</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>FD</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comment</b>
27.	The assessment workload is appropriate for both staff and students in the programme						
28.	The programme contains a balance of formative and summative assessment.						
29.	There are many opportunities for students to self and peer monitor their performance throughout the programme						
30.	A consistent and coordinated approach to programme assessment and feedback should be evident						
31.	Students are given information on the programme's assessment and feedback strategy						
32.	Each programme should have a defined assessment and feedback structure that Module Co-ordinators should be aware of and adhere to .						
33.	There are procedures in place to ensure the reliability of the programme's assessment						
34.	All assessments are checked for academic honesty and can be reviewed by a third party (external examiner etc.)						
35.	Students have opportunities to be assessed by different approaches in the programme.						
36.	The technology used is supportive of the assessment strategies in the programme.						
	<b>Programme Evaluation</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>FD</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comment</b>
37.	The programme evaluation strategy incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data						
38.	Programme data such as student performance, progression rates etc. is closely monitored.						
39.	Programme responds to feedback and evaluations						
40.	An evaluation strategy involving a range of stakeholders is in place which feeds back into the design process, i.e, students, graduates, staff, others						
	<b>Programme Support</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>FD</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comment</b>
41.	Students are given appropriate help with technology at key points in the programme						
42.	it is important that students are inducted into new learning situations with ample programme orientation						
43.	Timely and accessible support must be available to the Learner						
44.	The on-line library is accessible and user-friendly for the students						
45.	The institutional VLE supports the programme's activities.						
46.	Students should be made aware of who is responsible for providing their programme support.						
47.	There is on-going staff development support for the on-line and blended aspects of the programme						
48.	The programme documentation refers to the relevant institutional and school/department policies						

**General Comments and Observations:**

## Some ideas for change:

Based on your programme team's conversation, what are the key ideas you would like to do to enhance the programme, in order of your current priorities:

1.

2.

3.

4.

## Some useful resources for curriculum enhancement are:

Diamond, R. M. (1998). *Designing and Assessing Courses and Curricula: A Practical Guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

O'Neill, G. (2015). *Curriculum Design in Higher Education: Theory to Practice*, Dublin: UCD Teaching & Learning. ISBN 9781905254989 <http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/UCDTLP0068.pdf> . Also available from UCD Research repository at: <http://researchrepository.ucd.ie/handle/10197/7137>

Toohey, S. (2000). *Designing courses for higher education*. Buckingham: SRHE & Open University Press.

## Section 2: Module Review and Enhancement

The following are suggested steps to use the tool

> [www.ucd.ie/teaching](http://www.ucd.ie/teaching)

**1. Self-Assess.** To gather your own thoughts, initially individually self-assess against the module statements

**2. Gather further information** (student feedback, module descriptors, documents) to answer any outstanding questions and update self assessment

**3. Peer review:** At this point, it is useful to have a peer conversation on the findings of your self-assessment for the purposes of discussing enhancement. This peer review could:

- take the form of a conversation with a colleague on the same programme;
- be between two key contributors to the module who both self-assess and share findings; or
- Be incorporated into a programme team review meeting.

Discuss some ideas for action with your colleagues

**4. Action Plan:** Prioritise some key actions

**5. Implement these ideas:** Carry out some of the key ideas

**6. Re-evaluate** using the tool



## Scoring the Statements.

Having read the statement, tick the description that best represents your module at this point in time.

# UCD TEACHING AND LEARNING/RESOURCES

## Exemplary (E)

You consider this to be good practice in your context and would be willing to share it as a good example to others.

## Achieved (A)

You consider you have met the expectations around this statement, for your context. Further work could make it exemplary

## Further Development Needed (FD)

You are aware that you have not met and/or that work needs to be done in this area, but resources may have inhibited you in achieving this, i.e. time, financial, staffing. You may not have full control over its implementation at this point in time, but further work is required.

## Significant Development Needed (SD)

No attention has been given to this area. There may be lack of awareness of its importance. Significant work is required.

**N/A:** This statement is not applicable for this programme.

Module Categories and Statements							
Module Learning Outcomes		E	A	FD	SD	NA	Comment
1	Learning outcomes are achievable						
2	Learning outcomes can be measured						

# UCD TEACHING AND LEARNING/RESOURCES

3	Learning outcomes connect directly to the assessment criteria that are used to judge achievement						
4	Learning outcomes are formulated in a language that is readily comprehensible to the relevant learner group						
5	Learning outcomes are clear and concise						
6	Learning activities and assessment activities are constructively aligned with learning outcomes						
7	Learning outcomes are appropriate to the module's level						
	<b>Module Assessment and Feedback</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>FD</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comment</b>
8	Formative assessment opportunities are provided						
9	Feedback provision is clearly stated and provided in a timely manner						
10	Assessments are both reliable and valid with respect to the learning outcomes						
	<b>Module Interaction</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>FD</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comment</b>
11	There is an appropriate mix of learning resources and learning activities						
12	Content/information is chunked and sequenced in a logical and clear manner						
13	Learning activities are designed to encourage student engagement and interaction, where appropriate						
14	Opportunities for student to teacher interaction are provided						
15	Opportunities for student reflection on learning are provided						
	<b>Module Learner Support</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>FD</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comment</b>
16	Learners are provided with both documentation and/or an "induction session" at the outset that will assist them in completing the module and in understanding its objectives, procedures, support contacts and netiquette guidelines.						
17	Module orientation materials are available online for those unable to attend in person						
18	Learners can gain access to support in a timely fashion						
19	Methods for student and teacher interactions are clearly outlined						
20	Student learning and progress is monitored with appropriate academic support provided						
	<b>Module Learning Materials</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>FD</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comment</b>
21	The instructional materials are provided in formats suitable for the cohort of learners and their devices (file size download, file type to be displayed)						
22	Content conforms with technical accessibility standards (e.g. W3C WAI)						
23	Content is current, reliable and copyright cleared and referenced correctly						
24	Open Educational Resources are listed where possible						
	<b>Module User Experience</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>FD</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Comment</b>
25	The online learning environment is well organised, consistent and easy to navigate						
26	Videos are streamed whenever possible; graphics are optimized for web delivery and display without needing extensive scrolling						

Module Evaluation							
27	Module evaluation feeds back into overall programme evaluation						
28	Learners have the opportunity to provide feedback on the module						
29	Relevant stakeholders have an opportunity to give feedback on the module						
30	Module evaluation process is formative and feeds back into the curriculum design process						
31	Students are informed of changes made based on previous students' feedback, where relevant						

## General Comments and Observations

### Some ideas for change:

Based on your peer conversation, what are the key ideas you would like to do to enhance the module, in order of your current priorities:

1.

2.

3.

4.

### Some useful resources for module enhancement are:

O'Neill, G. Galvin, A. (2015). *Blended Module Design*, In O'Neill, G. (2015). *Curriculum Design in Higher Education: Theory to Practice*, Dublin: UCD Teaching & Learning. ISBN 9781905254989  
<http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/UCDTLP0068.pdf> . Also available from UCD Research repository at:  
<http://researchrepository.ucd.ie/handle/10197/7137>

# UCD TEACHING AND LEARNING/RESOURCES

Fink, L.D. (2003). *A Self-directed Guide to Designing Courses*.

<https://www.deefinkandassociates.com/GuidetoCourseDesignAug05.pdf>

## References and Bibliography

- Allen, E. & Seaman, J. (2010). *Class Differences: Online Education in the United States*,. Babson Survey Research Group
- Benson, A. D. (2003). Dimensions of quality in online degree programs. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 17(3), 145-149. doi:10.1207/S15389286AJDE1703\_2
- Chaney, B et. al. (2009). A Primer on Quality Indicators of Distance Education. *Health Promotion Practice*. 10(2):222-231
- Gibson, P.A & P.T Dunning (2013) Creating quality online course design through a peer-reviewed assessment, *Journal of Public Affairs Education* (2013) 18(1), 209–228
- Holey EA, Feeley JL, Dixon J, Whittaker VJ. (2007) An exploration of the use of simple statistics to measure consensus and stability in Delphi studies. *BMC Medical Research Methods*, 7:52.
- Magdalena, J. (2010) Quality Assurance of e-learning: a review of approaches and practices in Higher Education. Sofia University E-Learning Journal. 1:
- Masoumi, D., Lindstrom, B. (2011). Quality in e-learning: a framework for promoting and assuring quality in virtual institutions. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*. 28: 27-41.
- Mayes, T. & de Freitas, S. (2007). *Learning and e-Learning: The role of theory*. In H. Beetham & R. Sharpe (eds) Rethinking pedagogy in the digital age. London. Routledge.
- Ogunleye, A. (2013) Quality Assurance and Quality Indicators in Open and Distance Education: Context, Concerns and Challenges. *International Journal of Educational Research and Technology*., Vol 4[2]: 49-62
- Shelton K., Isernhagen, J. (2012) *Examining Elements of Quality Within Online Education Programs In Higher Education*. NCEA Publications Handbook on Virtual / Online Instruction and Programs in Education Leadership. Accessed: <http://cnx.org/content/m41700/1.3/>. 26-09-14
- Shelton, K (2010) *A Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Education Programs: A Delphi Study*. Dissertation. Accessed: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1039&context=cehsedaddiss>. 26-09-14.
- Whisler, R, V. (2012) *Quality Standards as a Guide for Instructors Developing Online Courses for the First Time*. Learning and Performance Quarterly 1(1). pp40-50
- O’Neill, G. (2015). *Curriculum Design in Higher Education: Theory to Practice*, Dublin: UCD Teaching & Learning. ISBN 9781905254989 <http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/UCDTLP0068.pdf> . Also available from UCD Research repository at: <http://researchrepository.ucd.ie/handle/10197/7137>
- O’Neill, G. Cashman, D (2015a) *Using existing tools to assist in the self and peer review of online and blended programmes*. National Forum Seminar Series, 29th April, 2015, UCD Dublin. Slides and resources available at <http://tinyurl.com/selfpeer2>
- O’Neill, G., Cashman, D. (2015b) *Development of an Irish tool to assist in the self and peer review of online programme and module design: initial findings*. EdTech2015, 28-29<sup>th</sup> May 2015. <http://programme.exordo.com/edtech2015/delegates/presentation/97/> . EdTech2016, 28-29<sup>th</sup> May 2015.
- O’Neill, G., Cashman, D. (2016) *Development of an Irish tool to assist in self and peer review of online programme and module design: Stage 2 Delphi study results*, 26-27<sup>th</sup> May 2016. <http://ilta.ie/edtech/edtech-2016/>
- Ornstein, A.C., Hunkins, F.P. (2009) *Curriculum foundations, principles and issues*. (5rd ed). Boston: Pearson Education Inc.
- UCD Teaching & Learning (2014) *Designing and Revising Curriculum for Graduate Taught Programmes*, Project Archive, accessed <http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/projects/designingandrevisingcurriculumforgraduatetaughtprogrammes/>

Whiting P, Rutjes, AWS., Reitsma J.B., Bossuyt, PMM., J. Kleijnen (2003) The development of QUADAS: a tool for the quality assessment of studies of diagnostic accuracy included in systematic reviews, *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 3 (25) <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2288/3/25> doi:10.1186/1471-2288-3-25