Nottingham Trent University

Quality Handbook

Part D: Course design, management and enhancement

Section 14: Learning and teaching

Section 14

Contents

1. Student outcomes

A principal aim of all the University's courses is to develop graduates who are highly sought after by employers and inspired to learn throughout the whole of their lives. This means that learning and teaching are framed to develop students' intellectual rigour and agility, initiative, creativity and collaboration.

Requirements

1.1   Studying at NTU should be an inspiration, a transformational experience and a catalyst for accomplishment in life and career.

1.2   The University seeks to develop rounded graduates who have the skills, integrity and commitment to make a positive impact on the communities in which they live and work. Courses must therefore anticipate and be responsive to the changing societies in which our graduates will work and live.

1.3   Students should develop intellectual rigour and agility, initiative and creativity, enabling them to adapt and respond to the *future* needs of employers and society and to thrive in life and work. Students should also develop career management proficiency.

1.4   Courses should also seek to develop the skills and qualities sought by multi-national employers and encourage students to engage with opportunities for language learning.

1.5   Alongside entrepreneurial skills and a capacity for multi-disciplinary collaboration, the ability to network is a prized attribute for graduates. This means having access to people, organisations, information and resources.

1.6   Groups of students with differing entry characteristics should be indistinguishable from one another in their achievements on and following graduation.

1.7   Further information about the University's framework for enabling student development and achievement is contained in the Quality Handbook (QH) Section 2.

1.8   QH Section 12 Course Design provides further information about the principles and requirements for the design of courses and curricula at Nottingham Trent University.

2. Community

The University privileges the course community and this community is inclusive, scholarly and open. Course design and the course environment should create the conditions to enable success for all students regardless of

difference or impairment. Learning and working environments should inspire and promote a culture of ambition and innovation.

Requirements

2.1 All aspects of the course are informed by and celebrate diverse perspectives. Curricula, pedagogies, assessment strategies and services are designed for inclusion.

2.2 The course community must be one in which all can interact and thrive. The diversity of our students is welcomed and valued and it should be recognised that this diversity can be an asset to students' learning. Voices of diverse student groupings should be included in feedback and continuous further planning regarding all aspects of the course and its community.

2.3 The learning environment should be underpinned by common principles and values, whichever study mode a student chooses.

2.4 Students should have opportunities to engage with communities beyond the course, including those external to NTU and the wider Nottingham community as well as international communities. They should therefore have a timetable that allows for personal study as well as participation in wider activities.

2.5 Students should be enabled and encouraged to benefit from the multiple perspectives offered by open educational resources from across the world.

2.6 A positive staff experience should be supported, in order to enable a positive student experience.

3. Transition

The University helps students make a transition into their course community and thrive within it.

Requirements

3.1 Central to making a successful transition is that students are provided with an environment for learning that is engaging, inspiring and inclusive and that helps them engage.

3.2 The learning environment includes the digital environment: students should be supported in their engagement with online learning opportunities.

3.3 Learning opportunities should be predicated on working with all students to help them to achieve.

3.4 All students should be helped to become independent and self-directed in their learning and to achieve high academic standards.

3.5 All undergraduate and postgraduate students will be provided with academic guidance. All undergraduates should also have a named course tutor and tutor group, which, wherever possible, will remain constant throughout the period of study.

3.6 Tutorials can play a key role in supporting students' transition into their course community and helping them thrive within it. Academic colleagues have the skills, tools, and capacity to enhance a tutorial system that underpin a personalised learning experience for all our students.

3.7 Course teams should discuss with students the nature of higher education scholarship and what they can expect at University as they progress.

4. Learning and teaching approaches

Learning and teaching comprise the most important part of the student experience and the University aims to make this experience stimulating, scholarly and intellectually challenging. The student experience is personalised by empowering students to make choices regarding their learning.

Requirements

4.1 The academic foundations of the NTU student experience are:

  a. a focus on experiential learning and exposure to different experiences;

  b. enquiry-based learning and recognition of the mutually-enriching relationships between teaching and research.

4.2 Students will experience a range of learning and teaching methods, including traditional lectures, seminars and smaller group sessions, laboratory and studio work.

4.3 A distinctive NTU student experience is wider than the curriculum and this wider experience is important in developing graduate attributes. Students should have opportunities to engage in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, such as:

  a. international exchange schemes, work placements, work-based projects and enterprise opportunities as part of their course;

  b. volunteering, course representation, Students' Union activities, sports, societies and cultural activities outside their course;

  c. additional qualifications, for example language courses.

4.4 Students will be supported and guided in independent study. The most important factor in students' achievement is the extent to which they shape and manage their own learning. This is crucial in their development as critical thinkers and independent learners and is key in the development of several NTU graduate attributes.

4.5 Students will also be supported to develop their use of digital technology, not only in their studies, but also in terms of their disciplinary or professional practice. The University will provide an environment in which this practice can thrive, including access to digital resources and current (or emerging) technologies.

4.6 All undergraduate courses will provide a capstone project in the final year that develops synthesis and criticality, and functions as a culmination to students' studies.

4.7 All undergraduate courses will provide mechanisms to enable personalisation. This should include providing students with opportunities to contribute to the shaping of their learning experience. Course teams should actively engage students in matters relevant to their course or research degree programme. (QH Section 8 discusses principles and requirements for student engagement.)

4.8 Students are able to request a break in study or vary their rate of study in particular circumstances (see Quality Handbook Supplement (QHS) 2A).

5. Personal tutoring and tutorials

Courses are designed to include tutorial systems which support the University's ambition to provide a personalised learning experience for all students.

5.1 The following are the principles upon which personal tutoring at NTU are based:

a. The overarching role of a personal tutor is to coach and mentor students, providing personalised academic, pastoral and professional advice and guidance and serving as a gateway to further specialist support. This support may include:

- referrals to specialist services and support, e.g., counselling;

- signposting other services and opportunities, e.g., volunteering.

b. Tutorials play a crucial role in supporting students' social and academic transition into, through and out of higher education, fostering their sense of identity and belonging. This is particularly important in the first year.

c. Tutorials should be used to enhance students' understanding of the core academic knowledge and disciplinary skills of their course, communicate high expectations for all students and support confidence and understanding of how success is achieved.

Design and planning

5.2 The design of tutorial support should be considered and planned at course level. As no single model of support has been shown to be universally successful, a mixed model of formats will offer balance.

5.3 Tutorials are primarily a student-centred form of teaching and, as such, tutorial sessions require advance planning and consideration of outcomes.

5.4 As students are unlikely to have much experience of one-to-one tutorials or coaching by teachers, all course teams should give careful consideration to how they communicate the purpose, goals and benefits of tutoring to students.

5.5 Personal tutoring is an important form of staff/student contact and should be scheduled alongside other course elements in order to support student engagement.

5.6 While there may be a role for student-initiated contact through services such as office hours, research suggests that students from Success for All backgrounds are least likely to use such services.

5.7 The NTU Student Dashboard is a resource designed to support tutorials. It contains important information useful for different points in the academic year. Where possible and appropriate, staff should use the resource (including recording notes and agreed actions).

Professional development

5.8 Personal tutoring is a skilled activity; staff are expected to participate in professional development and make use of resources available to meet the needs of this role and to effectively signpost students to support.

5.9 Supporting students is not limited to personal tutors, but is the responsibility of those staff who come into contact with them. As such, relevant professional development opportunities and resources should be provided, as appropriate.

6. Attributes of high quality teaching

The University values high quality teaching by appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

Requirements

6.1 The University's attributes for high quality teachers are as follows:

Attribute	Indicator
Creates memorable, positive learning experiences	• Is an engaging and effective communicator who is able to translate complex and difficult concepts for students and bring the subject alive
	• Knows, and empathises with their students, understanding and responding to their needs
	• Builds effective relationships with students, motivating and encouraging them, guiding their learning and

		ensuring that they feel confident and valued when expressing their ideas
Is a catalyst for change in the student		• Creates an intellectually challenging learning environment that stretches students and makes them think in different ways about their subject
		• Constructs transformative experiences that encourage risk-taking, employing thought-provoking and sometimes disruptive discussions and tasks that lead to revelation
		• Involves students in opportunities to share ideas and construct their own knowledge, leaving them hungry to know more
Embodies the discipline, practice or profession for the student		• Adopts a scholarly approach to their subject and has a rich understanding of how it is taught and learnt, along with a disciplinary passion and curiosity which engages students
		• Models personal and professional integrity and wisdom
		• Works in partnership with students, respecting their ideas and contributions and giving credence to what is said

7. Student attendance

This section of the Quality Handbook is now superseded by the University's Engagement and Attendance policy ([Quality Handbook Section 2A: Student Engagement and Attendance policy – Requirements](#)).

8. Use of learning analytics to support student success

Nottingham Trent University generates and analyses student data for the purposes of improving student learning opportunities. This policy outlines how the University uses learning analytics methodologies to improve the use of this data.

8.1 The purpose of learning analytics at NTU is to:

  a. enhance student retention, by alerting staff and individual students when a student is potentially at risk of early withdrawal;

  b. enhance the working relationship between tutors and students by providing tutors with timely, meaningful information to enable more informed discussions with students;

  c. enhance student engagement and achievement by providing students with personalised information about how they are engaging with their studies;

  d. enhance the efficiency of University support systems through better early warnings and more targeted support;

  e. provide evidence that the University is supporting and engaging Tier 4 students appropriately;

  f. provide useful data for researching the experience of student cohorts that can be used to subsequently improve the learning experience and University systems.

Explanatory note

  ▪ Learning analytics applies big data practices in an educational setting. The most frequently used is to identify students who may be at risk of early withdrawal or underachievement by comparing their current patterns of engagement with those of previous students.

Requirements

8.2 The practical application of learning analytics is described using NTU Student Dashboard.

8.3 The Dashboard is used to support the student learning experience. It must not be used for the purposes of assessment.

8.4 The Dashboard can alert students and staff to the risk of low engagement. Although staff can advise students of the risks of low engagement, students remain responsible for their own learning and engaging with their studies.

8.5 Learning analytics can only provide a partial picture about the student. Staff members are expected to use their professional judgement and use the Dashboard to enhance, not replace, dialogue with students.

8.6 Course teams should encourage students to use the Dashboard as a means to reflect on engagement with their studies. Use of the Dashboard must be explained to students early in their time at NTU: during induction, an early tutorial or other appropriate point.

8.7 Course teams, particularly those individuals with tutoring responsibilities, are expected to use the Dashboard as one of the tools to support and advise students.

8.8 A limited number of administrative and professional services staff members (for example those in Student Support Services) also have access to the Dashboard for the purpose of supporting students.

8.9 The Student Engagement Manager will manage ongoing Dashboard developments, monitor the Dashboard's use, efficacy and ethical considerations.

8.10 It is not possible for students to opt out from having their data in the Dashboard or other University core information systems. As part of their enrolment conditions, students give permission to the University to use and process data. It would not be possible to deliver courses or manage support for students without this data.

8.11 Access to the Dashboard is restricted as follows:

    a. Students can only see their own personal Dashboard.

    b. Academic staff can only see the Dashboards of students within their academic team and those they teach in other areas. Access is not normally granted to hourly paid lecturers.

    c. Designated managers and senior academics in each School can access Dashboards for students in the whole School.

    d. Administrators can see Dashboards for students within their School.

    e. Designated staff providing academic or pastoral support to students can access Dashboards across NTU.

    f. Designated staff involved in Dashboard development also have access to student dashboards across NTU.

8.12 Data about individual students will only be shared with third parties in the following circumstances:

    a. Where it can provide useful information in an emergency (explained by the Student Support Services document 'Policy for crisis intervention – students causing concern/students at risk').

    b. Tutors may use the data to provide references for students. Tutors are expected to use the data fairly and responsibly. They must ensure that students suffer no disadvantage due to protected characteristics described in the Equality Act 2010.

    c. Where there is a specific requirement to share data with employers as defined within the degree apprenticeship commitment statement. Further guidance is provide in QH Section 10F.

    d. Where international students are Government sponsored.

8.13 Student data generated by the Dashboard will be used to conduct research into the student learning experience. Where such data are used, the Student Dashboard Steering Group will ensure that the data can never identify individual students.

Explanatory notes

- Much of the practice needed to utilise learning analytics responsibly is governed by UK data protection legislation. NTU's data protection policy

outlines how data will be used responsibly and forms part of students' enrolment conditions.

■ As with all data sources about individual students, staff users must carefully consider their own reactions to the data presented. They must take great care not to allow unconscious bias to creep into their relationships with students particularly with regards to assessment.

■ The degree apprenticeship commitment statement is a legal agreement between the employer, NTU and the apprentice confirming the apprenticeship course and the roles and responsibilities of each partner.

9. Assessment

Assessment is planned at course level; it is designed to enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the learning outcomes of the award. Appropriate assessment also informs teaching, facilitates and shapes learning and engagement.

Requirements

9.1 The University's principles and regulations for assessment and assessment feedback are set out in the QH Section 15.

9.2 Section 15 also describes the University's principles and regulations for assessment feedback. In addition to such formal feedback, learning activities should include frequent tasks which generate formative feedback from a variety of sources, encourage self-reflection, and support the application of feedback to improve work in progress.

10. Academic quality

There is a community responsibility for academic quality, grounded in scholarly discussion of learning, teaching and curriculum design and informed by evidence.

Requirements

10.1 Quality management is a core academic responsibility and a central part of academic endeavour.

10.2 Quality management is founded on professional judgement, student representation, student satisfaction and externality.

10.3 The University, in partnership with the student body, defines and promotes a range of opportunities for any student to engage in educational enhancement and quality assurance. (Please refer to QH Section 8.)

10.4 Externality in the widest sense is an important part of quality management, supporting criticality and reflexivity.

10.5 Good course management and organisation are important features of successful courses.

11. Professional environment

The University cultivates a professional environment in which learning and teaching thrives. This environment is one in which colleagues can continue to develop their practice throughout their career.

Requirements

11.1 The professional environment for learning and teaching should be scholarly, collegial and inclusive, and encourage creativity and innovation.

11.2 Staff should engage in scholarship and developmental work related to teaching, curriculum, and delivery methods.

11.3 Criteria for professional practice standards are articulated in the University's *Professional Development Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education.*

11.4 Professional development for learning and teaching must be aligned to the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF).

11.5 All hourly-paid lecturers and postgraduate research students new to teaching in higher education must complete a short professional development programme.

11.6 Observation of teaching is an important element in the development of professional practice and may be used, for example, to engender scholarly dialogue about teaching, to create opportunities for practice exchange, or as part of mentoring support. Observation also forms part of the University's ongoing monitoring and review of quality. The University uses several types of observation:

　　a. The NTU Teaching Observation Scheme is intended to support local academic managers in reviewing and understanding the teaching strengths and development needs of their teams. Within this scheme, all staff who teach students will have their teaching practice observed at least once every two academic years, by an experienced colleague who is usually the individual who undertakes the staff member's Appraisal. (Please refer to the NTU Teaching Observation Policy and Guidance).

b. Academic staff on probation and those engaged in the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education are observed in accordance with the requirements of those schemes.

c. Additionally, Schools are encouraged to support appropriate local peer observation schemes which aim to support practice exchange, engender scholarly dialogue about teaching, and sustain inclusive communities of practice for learning and teaching. Peer observation may extend beyond classroom practice to encompass a broad range of activities associated with teaching and support of learning.

11.7 School Academic Standards and Quality Committees (SASQCs) must ensure that observation schemes in their area are contributing positively to the overall aims of quality management. SASQCs should reflect on this as part of their annual monitoring and reporting.

Policy owner
CADQ

Change history			
Version:	Approval date:	Implementation date:	Nature of significant revisions:
Sept 2016	30.09.16	01.10.16	Removal of reference to graduate attributes
			Strengthening of reference to Strategic Plan
Sept 2017	12.09.17	01.10.17	Requirements for School attendance policies revised for clarity. Inclusion of additional data sharing circumstances relating the degree apprenticeship commitment statements. Amendments to reflect the discontinuation of the Student Dashboard Group, the requirement to share data with third parties where international students are sponsored, and revised for Tier 4 requirements

Sept 2018	12.09.18	01.10.18	None
Sept 2019	11.09.19	01.10.19	None
Sept 2021	07.09.21	01.10.21	None
Sept 2022	22.09.22	01.10.22	None
May 2025	02.05.25	02.05.25	Removal of part 7.

Equality Analysis		
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