



Nottingham Trent
University

Using learning engagement time for planning

Defining learning engagement time

This document is for guidance only and is to support planning and to help communicate with students. There is no requirement to update module specifications to redefine contact time and this framing should *not* be used in material information about courses.

Courses have traditionally defined face-to-face teaching and learning methods as 'contact hours' and all other forms of learning as 'non-contact hours'. In flexible learning environments the division may not be as clear. This way of learning provides a broader set of tools, removing barriers and shifting the definition to focus on the student journey.

In this context, and for planning purposes, course teams may instead want to think in terms of **learning engagement time** to describe the range of learning and teaching approaches that students experience on a module.

Learning engagement time comprises two broad learning methods:

- Directed learning, and;
- Guided independent learning

Learning engagement time accounts for the total number of hours of expected learning in a week.

Example of learning engagement time:

A 20-credit module is made up of a total of 200 notional learning hours. If the module is delivered over 15 weeks the total amount of learning engagement time each week is 13.3 hours.

Weekly learning engagement time is planned to include both directed learning and guided independent learning and is clearly structured to provide a logical and coherent learning experience for students.

Directed learning

Directed learning is broadly made of facilitated activities that a student is expected to undertake each week in order to meet the learning outcomes. In the context of blended learning this will be made up of both 'live' and 'on-demand' learning.

Live learning

Live (synchronous) learning is any teaching session that a student is expected to attend at a particular time. This includes both on-campus in person and live online sessions. All live learning is scheduled in the timetable.

On-demand

On-demand (asynchronous) learning is made up of activities that a student is expected to complete outside of the live sessions to meet the module learning outcomes. On-demand activities are not scheduled and can be completed at a time that suits the student. Where on-demand activities need to be completed in advance of a live session, this should be clearly indicated to students in your NOW learning room.

Examples of directed learning

The table below provides some examples of directed learning activities, both live and on-demand.

Examples of directed learning	
Live	On-campus, in-person teaching sessions such as workshops, studios, laboratories, SCALE-UP, and action learning sets
	Live online sessions such as seminars, webinars, briefings, simulations, demonstrations, facilitated workbooks, guest sessions, group discussions, tutorials, individual and group presentations
On-demand	Tutor generated video materials, automated knowledge checks, discussion forum, problem solving/enquiry based activity, peer review, formative and summative assessment

Guided independent learning

Guided independent learning is activity undertaken by students beyond that required to meet the module learning outcomes. Guided independent learning is not scheduled. This activity forms part of the overall learning engagement time expected each week and care should be taken to achieve a balance between directed and independent learning time.

The table below provides some examples of guided independent learning activities.

Examples of guided independent learning
Wider reading around a topic, externally generated video material such as TedEd, LinkedIn learning, study skills support

Example 1: A week of learning engagement time based on current contact time

This example provides a fairly simple option for converting existing contact and non-contact time into learning engagement. It is based on a 20-credit module with 45 contact hours and 155 non-contact hours over 15 weeks which equates to 13 hours of learning engagement time per week. The module is traditionally delivered with a one-hour lecture and a two-hour of seminar/workshop each week.

In this example, the lecture content is broken into short pre-recorded videos of ten minutes in length, with linking activities in between each video. The three hours of in-person learning are split between a one hour seminar and a two hour workshop. In this example, the student has around 9 hours of directed learning and 4 hours of guided independent learning time each week.

All timings are indicative. Individual students will take different amounts of time to complete each activity so you should take care not to include too many activities each week.

Activity title	Learning engagement type	Live/on-demand	Time estimate (minutes)
Pre-reading	Directed	On-demand	60
Wider research	Guided independent		60
Pre-recorded video	Directed	On-demand	10
Read a case study and add notes to a group space	Directed	On-demand	60
Seminar	Directed	Live in person	60
Pre-recorded video	Directed	On-demand	10
Wider research	Guided independent		60
Pre-recorded video	Directed	On-demand	10
Automated knowledge check	Directed	On-demand	10
Flipped task – enquiry based activity	Directed	On-Demand	60
Workshop	Directed	Live in person	120
Pre-recorded video	Directed	On-demand	10
Wider reading	Guided independent		60
Pre-recorded video	Directed	On-demand	10
Wider research	Guided independent		60

Pre-recorded video	Directed	On-demand	10
Formative assessment task	Directed	On-demand	120
Total learning engagement time: 780 minutes (13 hours)			