

Department of Academic Quality (DAQ)

A guide to Module Enhancement

Academic session 2021/2022

This guide is intended to provide support to all those involved in module enhancement.

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Introduction

As part of the De Montfort University's ongoing quality assurance and enhancement processes, every module must be evaluated by the teaching team each academic year. This evaluation should take into consideration of a variety of information including achievement rates, student views, external examiners comments and the observations of the teaching team, and should lead to action either to enhance provision or to address problems that have been identified.

Module enhancement via **Module Enhancement Plans (MEPs)** should ensure that:

- The module syllabus is relevant and up to date.
- The module specification (template) continues to accurately represent the module.
- The teaching, learning and assessment approach for the module continues to be effective.
- There is a formal opportunity for reflection and evaluation, which might lead to further developments.
- Feedback from the teaching team (if appropriate), external examiners and students is promptly responded to.

The national HE context is constantly changing and we need to reflect on what is best academic practice to support what are increasingly diverse student groups. Reference is made throughout this guide to students with protected characteristics. Protected characteristics are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful and the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| • Age | • Disability |
| • Gender reassignment | • Marriage and civil partnership* |
| • Pregnancy and maternity | • Race |
| • Religion or belief (including lack of belief) | • Sex |
| • Sexual orientation | |

* Marriage and civil partnership do not apply to educational provision

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

DMU academic quality processes (eg, validation, curriculum modifications, periodic review, annual monitoring, external examining) ensure that the University's approach to quality management, articulated through the University's Academic Quality Policy*, is embedded with the focus on enhancing the learning opportunities made available to all students and assuring quality and standards. Intrinsic to our academic quality processes is Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL is an educational framework that guides the design of learning, specifically around curriculum delivery, materials, assessments, policy and practice. The DMU UDL framework is based on a rigorous, research-based foundation; it provides a focussed and student-centred basis for understanding and applying inclusivity within teaching practice. A universal curriculum refers to planning programmes that are barrier-free. If programme content is well designed, delivered and assessed so that students with learning differences and physical disabilities are able to gain access, it will enable them to receive an equivalent learning experience to their peers. Our approach to teaching, learning, assessment and student support should be capable of anticipating, and adapting to, the needs of every student. These can be known and clear, as in the case of many disabled students, or subtle and intrinsic, arising from cultural or racial identity, self-expectation, learning 'styles' or other psychological attributes. The benefit of applying UDL is that if a DMU programme of study is made more accessible and inclusive; the benefits apply to all students. Faculty UDL Champions can assist

academic staff to explore, embed and strengthen UDL within their own practice, delivery, and curriculum and assessment design. Further information on UDL can be found at:

<http://www.dmu.ac.uk/dmu-students/udl/universal-design-for-learning.aspx>

* Academic Quality Policy: <http://www.dmu.ac.uk/about-dmu/quality-management-and-policy/academic-quality/daq-index.aspx>

Section 1: Operation of the module enhancement process

This process was devised in consultation with module leaders, programme leaders and Associate Professors Quality. The process has been designed to be flexible, to avoid duplication and to feed into other processes already in place across the institution, such as Programme monitoring (PSAR and CP-PAE) <https://www.dmu.ac.uk/about-dmu/quality-management-and-policy/academic-quality/monitoring/monitoring-paes.aspx>

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In completing the module enhancement plan (MEP), module teams are asked to confirm that they have considered the range of evidence available to them when reflecting on the modules, and to summarise the main elements of reflection, good practice and areas for further enhancement. **It is not the completion of the template which should become the focus – the important element is the reflection and evaluation**, with the MEP template being a way of recording this.

Part of the evidence for module enhancement is feedback received from students via interim module level feedback and end of module level feedback (MLF). A centralised and harmonised online MLF process is in place for this. Please consult your faculty Associate Professor Quality regarding any queries.

For module enhancement to be timely and useful, it is important that staff have a method of recording the reflection that they undertake **when this occurs**; however, it is also apparent that not all the information needed for a full evaluation is available at the same time. As different sources of evidence become available, e.g. external examiners reports or student feedback, it is envisaged that teams will consider them and update their module enhancement form as necessary. In this way the MEP is considered to be a **'live'** document from the time it is first commenced (e.g. during/after delivery when teams reflect on how it has gone) until the final piece of evidence has been received. For modules that run multiple times within an academic year, the MEP should be an annual aggregated enhancement plan.

Given that one of the key sources of evidence to be considered is student performance data, it is envisaged that the Action Plan section of the MEP will incorporate proposed actions (if appropriate) as a result of reviewing module pass rate trigger points, rather than a separate action plan being produced. Please note that evidence must be retained, especially any of an informal nature.

Once the MEP has been developed it should be submitted to the relevant programme leader/Programme Management Board (PMB) Chair for information. The programme leader will use the details to help inform the PSAR/PAE. The deadline for the submission of MEPs is to be agreed with the relevant programme leader and may vary for different types of taught provision. Faculties may also have their own arrangements eg, the Faculty of Computing, Engineering and Media have a requirement to submit MEPs prior to the assessment board where marks are considered as part of the module pack checklist for External Examiners (EEs).

Since the process is 'live' there will be a need to resubmit the module enhancement plan again when further data becomes available and the action plan is updated. This will enable the PSAR/PAE to be amended if necessary to reflect any change.

Programme leaders will receive completed MEPs from which they will construct the PSAR/PAEs. The PSARs/PAEs will be submitted to PMBs along with confirmation that all the MEPs have been received and scrutinised especially in relation to examples of good practice, where pass rates are below trigger point thresholds and/or where there are any other serious issues of concern. It is anticipated that action will have already been taken or recommended/required in response to any serious issues prior to this point. For modules used by more than one programme, the owning PMB is responsible for highlighting any specific issues with other relevant PMBs. PMB minutes will then record that all MEPs were received and that issues noted were considered, as well as detailing any specific discussions.

Faculty administrators will receive MEPs according to the agreed custom and practice for each faculty and will keep a record of them in the relevant minute book(s) for information. Each faculty should define a repository for completed MEPs.

Module leaders are required to make MEPs available to students via Blackboard.

Section 2: Completing the Module Enhancement Plan

Drafting of the MEP should take place at a time to be agreed within the faculty, in conjunction with the Associate Professor Quality but must take place before receipt of resit results. Some module/programme leaders may wish to discuss the draft with the EE at the time of the examination board, or include EE comment in the MEP (the MEP may be amended after the resits if necessary). A copy of the MEP template can be found at **Appendix 1**. An example of good practice can be found at **Appendix 2** and an example of poor practice can be found at **Appendix 3**.

How has the action plan been taken forward?

The MEP should include an update on action taken in response to the previous year's MEP. This should include details of whether the action has been successful in resolving the identified problem, has led to enhancement and whether any further action or monitoring is required. This section should also include details of any good practice identified and how this has been considered and taken forward.

Confirmation of evidence used

Module teams are asked to confirm and/or list the range of evidence available to them when reflecting on the modules.

Student performance

Information for this section can be obtained from a number of sources such as EE reports; student feedback etc, and specific performance data.

Please note ITMS colleagues are in the process of redeveloping the existing management information reports (including the module achievement dashboard, programme progression, retention and awards and student profiles) following the transition to the new student record system and an update on the availability of these reports will be provided in due course. The student survey, employability and programme level continuation and achievement data can be accessed through other reports within Tableau - please contact spsenquiries@dmu.ac.uk or ext 7654 if you require access or have any queries. For support in using available faculty data, please contact your Associate Dean Academic. The latest status update is available [here](#).

As the MEP is a 'live' document which is updated as and when each source of evidence

becomes available (eg EE reports or student feedback etc), interim module achievement data may be viewed after a main assessment board (eg June for standard undergraduate provision). This should be updated at the end of session to include any reassessment period (such as September).

Low module pass rates, below a threshold agreed at university level¹ should be thoroughly investigated and action taken to enhance student performance. Module leaders should consider UDL principles at each stage and whether any of the following have impacted on pass rates:

- Are there any particular groups of students that account for high failure rates, for example from a particular location or studying a particular course or programme of study?
- Have attendance patterns been significant?
- Are student profiles appropriate to the aims and learning outcomes of the module?
- Are students offered adequate academic guidance and tutorial support?
- Do teaching and assessment strategies need to be reviewed to accommodate particular intake types? For example students entering with little experience of unseen written examinations may require additional guidance on examination technique. Similarly, students with expertise in a particular form of learning may be unable to apply that under current assessment regimes.
- Do teaching and assessment strategies give sufficient consideration to students with protected characteristics under the Equality Act Section 4?
- Has the system of compensation meant that some level 4 students have been unable to resit a module, having obtained a percentage mark in the 30s, thereby depressing overall module pass rates?

Proposed action for enhancing student achievement rates should be clearly recorded on the MEP and, where appropriate, in PMB minutes. A specific timeframe for action should be identified and responsibility for that action clearly stated.

Action plan

The process of reflection on the evidence should lead to the development of an action plan for enhancement. Required action should be clearly articulated, including corresponding timescales and details of the person(s) responsible for taking the action. This will help to ensure that evaluation leads to quality enhancement wherever possible. At each stage of the process, the key principles of UDL should be taken into consideration.

i. Student feedback

The collection of module feedback from students is a major and vital part of the university's quality assurance processes. Feedback at this level should provide rapid and valuable guidance to the module leader on the performance of the module. PMBs should have a method in place to gather student feedback on the module content, delivery, assessment and resources as well as students' feedback of their engagement in the learning process. Feedback at module level can also be obtained through meetings with students, for example via Student Voice Committees (SVCs). The module team's response to student feedback needs to be timely to enable any changes (for example extra tutorials, adjustments to the curriculum, or changes in assessment methods) to be put in place prior to the start of the next session. It is also important to provide prompt feedback to student groups so that they appreciate the benefits that can be derived from

¹ Caution should be exercised with modules of fewer than 30 students, as small student numbers can tend to distort pass rates.

engaging in the module enhancement process.

Faculties should have methods in place for ensuring that all appropriate issues raised by students have resulted in action for enhancement. This will ensure that the process of gathering student feedback is sufficiently robust and genuinely self-evaluative.

ii. External Examiner and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) Feedback

Module leaders should reflect on any comments relevant to the module from EEs and, where appropriate, PSRBs. The PMB chair will have a copy of all EE reports. For further information on external examiners, please contact the Quality Officer (External Examiners/Awarding Bodies) in the Department of Academic Quality.

iii. Module content and resources / teaching learning and assessment

The teaching team should evaluate whether:

- The module syllabus is relevant and up to date.
- The module specification (template) continues to accurately represent the module.
- Module outcomes, and the actual level of attainment in the outcomes, allows the aims of the module to be met.
- Students are offered a coherent and integrated learning experience within the module.
- The module is underpinned by adequate and appropriate learning resources. In particular, the teaching team should consider whether:
 - Students have appropriate access to learning resources.
 - Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced to meet the needs of the module.
 - The level of teaching and learning resources are appropriate to the demands of the module.
 - The level and type of accommodation is appropriate to the needs of the module.
- Teaching, learning and assessment methods continue to be appropriate to the outcomes of the module and the needs of the student group. In particular, the teaching team should consider whether:
 - Clear and appropriate learning outcomes are stated.
 - Students are offered a broad range of learning opportunities and assessment methods which are relevant to the learning outcomes.
 - Students are encouraged to take active responsibility for their own learning.
 - Assessment tasks and criteria are clear to students.
 - Assessments provide an opportunity for students to learn through formative feedback.
 - Appropriate arrangements exist for the moderation and monitoring of the assessment process.

For further information on evaluating methods of teaching, learning and assessment, please contact your faculty Associate Professor Student Experience in the first instance.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Module Enhancement Plan Template

Module Enhancement Plan (MEP)

Template for all taught provision

Academic Session	
Module Title	Module Code
Programme Management Board(s)	Faculty
Module Leader	
1.	How has the action plan detailed in last year's MEP been taken forward?
2.	Identification of Good Practice
<i>Quote specific examples of good practice providing evidence to support this judgement. Consider and give examples of how successful good practice initiatives might be taken forward and/or shared.</i>	
3.	Please confirm which of the following key monitoring information has been considered and the evaluation of such has informed the production of this MEP:
Delivery team evaluation ☐	Student Feedback ☐
External examiners/agencies reports or comments ☐	Student performance Data ☐
Collaborative partner evaluations ☐	Other (please state):
4.	Student performance
<i>Briefly comment on factors such as student engagement, attendance, retention, progression, achievement based on review of the evidence noted above:</i>	

5.	Action Plan for the following academic session
<i>(To respond to external examiners/professional bodies, further develop/embed good practice and to address any identified areas of improvement)</i>	
6.	Signatures
I confirm that I have checked the accuracy of the module specification (template) held on the SAP system* ☐ The module specification (template) was last updated on This module evaluation has been prepared by the Module Leader(s), has been submitted to the relevant Programme Leader(s) or Programme Management Board Chair to be used as part of the evidence for compiling the PSAR/PAE (deadline for submission to be agreed with the relevant programme leader(s)): Signed: _____ Date: _____ (Module Leader(s))	

* If you wish to access the module specification on SAP, please contact your Programme Administrator.

Appendix 2: Module Enhancement Plan – example of good practice

Module Enhancement Plan (MEP)

Template for all taught provision

Academic Session *****	
Module Title *****	Module Code *****
Programme Management Board(s) *****	Faculty *****
Module Leader *****	
1.	How has the action plan detailed in last year's MEP been taken forward?
Having taken over the module, the following changes were implemented: • <u>Teaching material / delivery</u> ○ A teaching plan went through an evaluation and refinement period with an emphasis on placing more focus on core principles. As a result, term 1 and the first part of term 2 focused on this area. In view of these changes and the further addition of two employability weeks, it was necessary to slightly reduce the coverage of other specialised subject areas (most notably GUIs) at the end of the module. ○ In terms of specific topics, it was concluded that composition/aggregation would be introduced prior to inheritance during term 1. In term 2, there would be additional focus on abstract classes, interfaces, and generics. ○ Rather than having separate theory and practical lectures each week, a more dynamic approach was taken, whereby a single set of slides was delivered throughout each week, allowing for practical examples to be integrated along the way. ○ Lab work plans had previously covered two weeks - it was decided that having a fixed lab exercise each week would further encourage students to keep up to date. ○ Lab exercises were refined and in consideration of the fact that students only see their lab tutor for one hour per week, more examples were provided, as well as parallel notes, to assist students when working independently. • <u>Module Assessment</u> ○ It was decided to drop the cumulative contribution mark used in previous years and to replace this with a portfolio assessment whereby students would have assessed questions in their routine lab exercises and would then sit a phase test where they make modifications to these. The emphasis on this style of assessment was to keep students well engaged and up to date with their work during the first term. ○ The exam structure has been taken back to having a 60% weighted section A and 40% weighted section B, rather than the 50/50 structure used in the previous session. It was decided section B would contain 4 questions, rather than 3, to give students more choice.	
2.	Identification of Good Practice
<i>Quote specific examples of good practice providing evidence to support this judgement. Consider and give examples of how successful good practice initiatives might be taken forward and/or shared.</i>	

3.	Please confirm which of the following key monitoring information has been considered and the evaluation of such has informed the production of this MEP:										
Delivery team evaluation ✓		Student Feedback ✓									
External examiners/agencies reports or comments ✓		Student performance Data ✓									
Collaborative partner evaluations ☐		Other (please state):									
3.	Student performance										
<i>Briefly comment on factors such as student engagement, attendance, retention, progression, achievement based on review of the evidence noted above:</i> Those items checked in Section 3 will be summarised now: <u>External Examiner /agencies reports or comments</u> External reports/comments have been actively considered at the point at which they were received. All feedback thus far has been positive, primarily regarding the examination paper/solutions. <u>Student performance data</u> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No. enrolled</th> <th>No. passed</th> <th>No. deferred</th> <th>% pass rate</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>79</td> <td>70</td> <td>1</td> <td>90 *</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <i>* excludes 1 deferred/interrupted student so pass rate based on 70 out of 78</i> <u>Delivery team evaluation</u> Overall, the results of the module have been very positive, with a 90% pass rate. In comparison to the previous academic session, the averages and pass rates of both the coursework and examination components has increased. In particular, the examination went from having a 40% average mark and only a 46% pass rate last session to having a 51% average mark and 71% pass rate this session. This has obviously had a very positive impact on the overall module average (now 58%), and pass rate. The coursework results maintained a largely positive trend, with slight improvements on the previous academic session. It is felt that the portfolio assessment that was introduced this year was particularly useful in keeping students engaged and helping them progress during the crucial 1st term, when many of the fundamental principles are introduced. This likely also had a positive impact on their further assessment results. The examination results were a step in the right direction and it is thought that the changes made to the teaching plan (e.g. topic delivery), more integrated examples, a revision session at the end of both the first and second term and refinement of the examination paper, all contributed to this. In summary, the changes planned and implemented appear to have had a positive impact on the module's results. <u>Student Feedback</u> An interim and end of module feedback survey has been provided through Blackboard VLE, which students were offered to complete anonymously. The results of these have been overviewed and evaluated and are attached at the end of this evaluation plan. Of particular note, during the interim feedback survey, questions were posed to ascertain how students were finding some of the changes to their routine lab exercises, as well as the general delivery of the				No. enrolled	No. passed	No. deferred	% pass rate	79	70	1	90 *
No. enrolled	No. passed	No. deferred	% pass rate								
79	70	1	90 *								

module. Their general response was very positive and it was good to gain measured feedback on these changes.

4. Action Plan for the following academic session

(To respond to external examiners/professional bodies, further develop/embed good practice and to address any identified areas of improvement)

Student feedback gained during the Final Module Evaluation Form Survey will be taken into consideration when producing material for the upcoming academic session.

Bearing in mind the module went through a fairly large overhaul during the current academic session (as evidenced in *section 1* of this document), it is felt that less significant changes will be required for the upcoming session. The changes made to the delivery and content have largely received positive feedback and appeared to have had the desired effects. The changes in the assessment structure, with regards to the portfolio assessment, were also a success and will be carried forward.

The portfolio coursework's assessment criteria may be refined, to place more emphasis on the unseen lab test as it is felt that this is where students show their full potential. The examination paper will continue to be refined and there have been a few improvements identified during the current academic session.

There have been some routine changes identified throughout the current session, which will be implemented in order to refine lab exercises and lecture notes, as well as possibly altering smaller aspects of delivered content. More considerable changes will be applied due to the recent release of Java 8. It is felt that rather than a complete overhaul of the current taught content, a better way to integrate new features will be to modify existing examples and solutions throughout in order to showcase and take advantage of the likes of lambda expressions, functional interfaces and streams.

It has also been recognised that JavaFX is now the preferred Java GUI library, replacing its predecessor Swing. The actual benefits of making a transition to JavaFX however in terms of the current delivery of the module are minimal and in essence would just provide the same end product in a different syntax. Considering this, whilst it is advisable to merge content into JavaFX in the future, it is not by any means classified as being urgent.

5. Signatures

I confirm that I have checked the accuracy of the module specification (template) held on the SAP system* ✓

01/09/2019

The module specification (template) was last updated on

This module evaluation has been prepared by the Module Leader(s), has been submitted to the relevant Programme Leader(s) or Programme Management Board Chair to be used as part of the evidence for compiling the PSAR/PAE (deadline for submission to be agreed with the relevant programme leader(s)):

Signed: *****
(Module Leader(s))

Date: *****

* If you wish to access the module specification on SAP, please contact your Programme Administrator.

Appendix 3: Module Enhancement Plan – example of poor practice

Module Enhancement Plan (MEP)

Template for all taught provision

Academic Session *****	
Module Title *****	Module Code *****
Programme Management Board(s) *****	Faculty *****
Module Leader *****	
1.	How has the action plan detailed in last year's MEP been taken forward?
Module handbook improved.	
2.	Identification of Good Practice
Quote specific examples of good practice providing evidence to support this judgement. Consider and give examples of how successful good practice initiatives might be taken forward and/or shared.	
3.	Please confirm which of the following key monitoring information has been considered and the evaluation of such has informed the production of this MEP:
Delivery team evaluation ☐	Student Feedback ☐
External examiners/agencies reports or comments ✓	Student performance Data ✓
Collaborative partner evaluations ☐	Other (please state):
3.	Student performance
Briefly comment on factors such as student engagement, attendance, retention, progression, achievement based on review of the evidence noted above:	
Poor cohort lacking the necessary skills	
4.	Action Plan for the following academic session
(To respond to external examiners/professional bodies, further develop/embed good practice and to address any identified areas of improvement)	
Improvement Plan (including responsibilities and timescales for action):	
Update module reading list	

5.	Signatures
I confirm that I have checked the accuracy of the module specification (template) held on the SAP system* ☐ The module specification (template) was last updated on This module evaluation has been prepared by the Module Leader(s), has been submitted to the relevant Programme Leader(s) or Programme Management Board Chair to be used as part of the evidence for compiling the PSAR/PAE (deadline for submission to be agreed with the relevant programme leader(s)): Signed: ***** (Module Leader(s)) Date: *****	

* If you wish to access the module specification on SAP, please contact your Programme Administrator.