

Guidelines for the approval of new modules – by the New Module Validation Panel

<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/quality/course/valid.php.en>

QA standards and guidelines:

- [Code of Practice for Approval, Monitoring and Review](#)
- [Assessment Framework](#)
- [Training Guidance for Creating New Module \(Worktribe\)](#)

The University is committed to providing an appropriate and increasing level of challenge to its students across their studies. A key component of a challenge-based curriculum is providing signposting to students on the level of challenge introduced at each level through clearly worded learning outcomes.

- [Guidance to Learning Outcomes in Modules](#)
- [Writing Learning Outcomes](#)
- [QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

A Welsh Language Impact Assessment must be completed for all new programme developments and standalone modules. The form can be downloaded from the QAE Unit's [web site](#).

New modules are now created in the Worktribe Curriculum System

English: <https://curriculum.bangor.ac.uk/> Cymraeg: <https://cwricwlwm.bangor.ac.uk/>

Procedure to Approve Modules

New modules may be proposed outside programme validation and revalidation only:

- where they are required by professional bodies,
- to create new pathways linked to funding,
- for resource reasons,
- to meet strategic needs as outlined by the ASG.

Modules may also be approved outside programme validation and revalidation where an outline has been approved by the Quality Enhancement Group through the annual review (QA1) process

Welsh Language Standards (2016) Impact Assessment

In the case of stand-alone modules, the panel should consider the Welsh Language Standards (2016) Impact Assessment which notes how the changes are likely to impact on the ability of staff to work in Welsh, the recruitment and retainment of bilingual staff and the provision of Welsh medium teaching.

Panels will also consider the extent to which the design of the teaching presented considers the needs and priorities of students with protected characteristics and the extent to which the new module is likely to foster good relations between groups with protected characteristics and others.

Module Approval

The New Module Validation Panel will assess modules against statements below and reach one of the following decisions:

- Module approved.
- Module approved subject to minor amendments being made by the School. These will be specified and must be completed before the module is included in the University gazette.
- Module not approved and referred back to the School.

The module approval process must consider the following criteria:

1. The module learning outcomes, including their clarity and suitability for the specified level of learning.
2. The relationship of the module learning outcomes to programme learning outcomes if the module is proposed to be core or compulsory to any programme.
3. The extent to which the teaching and learning strategy, structure and assessment strategy meet the needs of all students.
4. The extent to which the teaching and learning strategy, structure and assessment strategy will provide learning opportunities needed to enable students fulfil the learning outcomes.
5. The credit weighting of the module.
6. The fit of the assessment to the Bangor [Assessment Framework](#).
7. The relationship of the assessment strategy to the programme-level assessment strategy if the module is proposed to be core or compulsory to any programme.
8. The grading criteria and their appropriateness for the assessment methods, learning outcomes and level of learning.
9. Where a module is being revised or replaced, the impact of revisions on other programmes for which the module is core or compulsory.
10. Where the module involves teaching and/or assessment by staff who are not members of the University, the nature of supervision provided.
11. Whether staff involved in the delivery of the module or students undertaking the module must undergo Disclosure and Barring Service checks, for example if the module involves contact with children or vulnerable adults.

Joint Teaching Across Levels

Joint teaching across levels is not normally permitted. It is only permitted across adjacent levels (e.g. across Levels 5 and 6 or across Levels 6 and 7) and where modules are designed in accordance with the following guidelines:

- There must be separately coded and validated modules for each Level with clearly distinguishable learning outcomes and assessment methods.
- If modules are taught in alternate years, the Level 5 and Level 6 versions of a module must be designed so that each cohort group is able to fulfil all the learning outcomes.
- Joint teaching activities across modules will typically involve didactic rather than discursive teaching (for example lectures rather than seminars or tutorials).
- If students are expected to engage in discussion, analysis or interpretation, separate activities and assessment should be arranged for each level. Such activities will typically be tutorials, seminars, group work and presentations.
- Modules across levels 5 and 6 may have distinct assessments which must test distinct learning outcomes. There should be no identical assessments for modules that employ joint teaching across levels 6 and 7.
- When schools wish to (re)validate modules that are taught across levels, both versions should be submitted for approval.

Learning Outcomes

Also refer to:

- [Guidance to Learning Outcomes in Modules](#)
- [Writing Learning Outcomes](#)

- Start with an action verb and write in the future tense. What students will be able to achieve at the end of the module. Good examples are given in the 'Writing Learning Outcomes'
- Clear and concise sentences that students, colleagues and external examiners can understand.
- They should be achievable and measurable.

- Write the outcome with what you want the students to be able to do after completing the module and how they will be assessed.
- It is recommended that around 4 learning outcomes are normally appropriate for a 20-credit module.
- Make them relevant to the topic.
- Do not refer to the process of Teaching and Learning methods and assessments in the outcome.
- Ensure that they reflect the level of learning required and the progression through the levels.
- Ensure that the module outcome is relevant and feeds to the programme's learning outcome.
- The following verbs are not recommended to be used after level 4 as they are hard to difficult to measure or observe: Appreciate, know, learn and understand.

Assessment Criteria

The assessment criteria for a module are entered in the Assessment Strategy field under the Details tab on a module record in the Worktribe Curriculum Management System. As a minimum this box should contain information on what students have to demonstrate in order to achieve different levels of performance (threshold, good, excellent). Grading criteria need to be written in such a way that they can be easily understood by students.

Ideally each module should have its own specific grading criteria relevant to the subject. However, the use of generic criteria is permissible (details below), provided that these are sufficiently detailed and relevant to the module and assessment methods.

A clear presentation of marks against grading criteria is required.

	UG	PGT
Excellent	70%> -A	70%>
Good	50%> -B	60%>
Threshold	40%> -D	50%>
Categorical Marking range can also be used.		

Generic Module Grading Criteria

These module approval form criteria provide Schools with guidance on what must be included as grading criteria when presenting a new module for approval. These criteria are intended as generic 'baseline' standards. Schools are encouraged to adapt the criteria to link them as closely as possible to particular assessments. For example, in a module with an examination and an oral presentation it is good practice to provide criteria for both forms of assessment. The criteria need not be as detailed as the criteria that are published in the on-line student handbook/module outlines but Schools may choose to present the module achievement criteria in the new module form.

Excellent (Grade A)

Work displays comprehensive knowledge and detailed understanding, reflecting extensive background study. The work is highly focussed, well structured, logically presented and with defended arguments. The work contains original interpretation and new links between topics are developed. The work is presented to a high standard with accurate communication and no factual or computational errors.

Good (Grade B)

Work displays sound knowledge and understanding but with some limitations. There is evidence of background study. The work had a defined and logical structure but with some weaknesses in the way in which arguments are presented. There is some original interpretation and demonstration of links between topics. The work is presented carefully with accurate communication and few factual or computational errors.

Pass (Grade C or D at Level 4-6: Grade C at Level 7)

The work only demonstrates knowledge of key areas/principles and there is limited evidence of originality or of background study. The work contains some irrelevant material and weaknesses in structure. Arguments are presented but they lack coherence. The work contains factual/computational errors with

little evidence of problem solving. There are weaknesses in the standard of the presentation and its accuracy.

Assessment Method

Module assessments are entered one by one in the Assessment tab on the module record in the [Worktribe Curriculum Management System](#). Detailed instructions on how to enter data into the specific fields are included in the [Guidance Document for New Modules](#).

Group work / Peer Assessment

Where assessment involves group work or peer assessment the method of determining an individual student's mark should be clearly indicated.

Issues to consider:

- Will the student be given a group or an individual mark? If a group mark, consider giving a lower % weighting.
- Peer-assessment must be monitored and equal chance to contribute to ensure fair play to all students. How will it be second marked or verified if there is a complaint?
- A mark **must** be quantified by a piece of work, therefore linking assessment to attendance is **not** permitted.

Description

A brief description of on the assessment. Do not just state Coursework or Essay, the student will need to have a brief description. Refrain from including specific essay titles as once the module has been published on the Gazette it cannot be changed.

Learning Outcomes

Link the learning outcomes to the assessments. Each assessment should measure one or more learning outcomes and each outcome must be assessed at least once. Do not link on all the learning outcomes for all the assessments as this could be considered as overassessment.

Weightings

Weightings of different elements must be included and be comparable in the amount of work involved.

Measuring the assessment load (refer to the Assessment Framework)

A full description is required. The following must be included:

- word limits of reports/essays/blogs etc.
- time limits of examinations and presentation.

Extracts from Assessment Framework

Assessment Workload and Equivalence Guidelines

In order to implement the above principles, steps should be taken by those designing modules and programmes to ensure that the assessment workload is appropriate, and falls within what is deemed acceptable under Bangor University's regulations.

As a guideline, it is suggested as a starting point that assessment should have a **notional effort time of 2-2.5 hours per credit**.

For traditional assessment methods this could be translated into **200-250 words per credit** (for an essay), and **12-15 minutes per credit** (for an exam). This is based on the assumption that a 1 hour exam represents 10 hours of effort time, and that a 1,000 word essay also represents 10 hours of effort time.

This suggests that, based on a hypothetical single assessment method, a 10 credit module would have either a 2,000-2,500 word essay or a 2-2.5 hour exam, with a total effort time of 20-25 hours.

In terms of equivalents, it is suggested that the following would each amount to 10 hours of effort time:

- A poster;
- A 1 hour MCQ test;
- An oral presentation of 10 minutes;
- A musical performance of 10 minutes;
- A 2,000 word reflective journal/blog entry;
- A 10-minute clinical assessment.

Examples on combinations of different assessment can be found in the Assessment Framework.

Extracts from Regulation 01: Coursework and Examination

For PGT Research Projects:

- 60 credit Research Project – must require a maximum of 20,000 words.
- 120 credit Research Project – must require a maximum of 40,000 words.

Amount of assessment

- If a module is assessed by a combination of methods, the length of the examination and coursework should be adjusted. For example, in a 10 credit module assessed by an examination and an essay (both worth 50% of the module marks), the examination must not be longer than 1½ hours and the essay must not be longer than 2,000 words.
- Module organisers must make sure that the time required for assessments (including preparation time) plus the time spent in other activities (e.g. lectures) is 100 learning hours per 10 credit module.

Word Limits

- Word limits for coursework must be defined when modules are approved.
- Students must be given the word limits with the details of each assessment.
- The word limits do not include footnotes, bibliography or appendices.
- For modules except PGT Research Projects, the module organiser can set word limits that include footnotes, bibliography and appendices provided that students are made aware that they are included in the word limit.

Teaching Method

Notional Learning Hours

- The sum of the 'contract' and 'private study' time in the module should match the 'credit rating'.
- For example, a 20 credit module the private study and contact time should add up to 200 hours.
- Contact hours should then be broken down in the 'format of teaching' section and how these will be delivered listed in the teaching strategy section. For example:
 - A 20 credit module with 48 hours of contact time there has to be 152 hours of private study.

In the entry you must complete all sections:

- Teaching strategy: Include a brief summary of how the module will be delivered weekly by breaking down the contact time for example:
 - Lectures – 24 hours (2 per week over 12 weeks)
 - Seminars – 12 hours (1 per week over 12 weeks)
 - External visits – 12 hours (4 x 3hrs visits)
- A brief description needs to be included for what the students are expected to achieve in Private Study

Note:

- Teaching method should be clear and be reflected in the aligned programme specification. If a module is core in a programme then the Teaching method must listed and be mapped against the programme learning outcomes.