

Bangor University technology-enhanced delivery for 2022/23

A key priority of Bangor University's Teaching and Learning Strategy 2021-25 is to accelerate our teaching and learning environment. Within this strategy, a main objective is to use leading technological innovations to enhance our digital capability, transform our digital learning environment, and develop our virtual international classroom. Based on the lessons learned from our delivery during the pandemic, the purpose of this document is to both capture the discussion that has led to, and to provide, expectations and guidance for our 2022/23 module, and thus, programme delivery.

Context

The Covid-19 pandemic led to a sudden and unprecedented shift from traditional, on campus teaching, to online, digital teaching. The excellent IT infrastructure at Bangor University enabled our staff to embrace this change and to continue to deliver their teaching via online platforms. Additional investment in virtual learning platforms (e.g., Blackboard Collaborate) and the development of a dedicated Blended Learning resource hub further enabled staff to deliver high-quality online content during the 2020-2021 academic year. In response to the ongoing influence of Covid-19, we developed a [dynamic approach to content delivery in 2021-2022](#). This approach included four types of delivery that enabled students to meet programme learning outcomes, whilst protecting staff and student safety: Synchronous on-campus; Synchronous online; Hybrid synchronous; Asynchronous online. Moving forward, we have an opportunity to learn from our experiences and to embed the successful developments and innovations that emerged from the Covid-19 era into our future delivery. However, it is vital that we embed these innovative developments in a pedagogically informed way, and that we provide a minimum set of expectations for the nature of our future delivery.

In planning for next academic year, we centred on a possible distinction between three different modes of modules as our primary module offer: *on-campus technology enhanced modules* (an enhanced version of our traditional module delivery), *blended learning modules*, and *distance/online modules*. A survey and discussion with College Directors Teaching and Learning, School Directors of Teaching and Learning, the Students' Union, the Quality Enhancement Unit, and the

International Education Centre resulted in consensus in certain areas, for example a recommendation to withdraw livestreaming associated with hybrid delivery (see below for further details). But variation, for example, in what percentage of contact time should be in-person on-campus versus online for modules. Further there were concerns around using the term blended learning at a modular level related to differing expectations of what blended learning is, with, given that we are half-way through a recruitment cycle, potential CMA issues and implications for Tier 4 visa students for next academic year.

Although on the surface providing these three modes of modules may seem to offer more flexibility in provision, it resulted in a lack of consensus and confusion, with questions around how these modules would then fit within our existing and validated undergraduate and postgraduate programmes without having to go through a validation process. Based on these discussions we have set out **two** modes of modules moving forward: **technology enhanced modules** and **distance/online** modules as our primary offer. Further clarification is also provided in relation to existing modules that might now be classed as best practice “blended” modules as part of future development.

Note: this document focuses on pedagogical considerations, however, as has been the case in the past two years, full consideration will be given to the health and safety of our staff and students for our teaching and learning delivery. All taught activity will follow a Health and Safety: Teaching and Learning Coronavirus General Protocols, which will state the arrangements for mitigating and managing residual risk from the coronavirus, reflecting good practice and any applicable legislative requirements. The 2022-23 Protocol will be developed in association with the Health, Safety and Emergency Management Task Group and will be supplemented by more detailed guidance for any higher risk activity.

Module delivery expectations

All modules delivered at Bangor University will include an element of Digital enhancement. For all modules:

1. Students will have access to an online virtual environment (Blackboard Ultra), where they will be able to access: information about the module (including learning outcomes, module content, and contact details); assignment guidelines; module materials (e.g., lecture slides, seminar

worksheets/handouts); reading lists; and, lecture recordings (in line with the existing [Bangor University Panopto policy](#)).

2. Due to the on-going pandemic in other countries and possible travel restrictions, next year we may still have off campus study requests from International students. Therefore, as part of facilitating learning for **all** students, lecture recordings (not a live-stream) are to be made available to students within 2 working days of the originally-timetabled lecture slot.^{1 2}
3. Module Blackboard sites, certainly within a School, are to be structured similarly, and Module Organisers are to clearly explain the structure of their Blackboard sites to students
4. Module Organisers are to consider holding a weekly drop-in session with students (either online or on-campus) to provide students with the opportunity to ask for example questions about module content and upcoming assignments- this is particularly important for modules with online elements as it gives students a way of connecting with the module organiser and module.

Using these minimum expectations as a baseline, two primary module modes are presented next.

On-campus, technology-enhanced modules (named full-time/part-time in worktribe)

‘Traditional’ modules that are specifically designed with an on-campus learner experience in mind. Whilst these modules use technology to enhance the student experience (e.g., via the use of a VLE), they are not designed for individuals wanting to complete their course/programme on-line or off-campus. These modules **comprise primarily of synchronous, on-campus sessions**. For these modules, the recording of lectures is a requirement, however due to the nature of the learning activities our recommendation is that on-campus sessions will not be lived streamed (see Appendix 1 below), thus hybrid teaching for these modules will not exist for the next academic year. **Normally with these modules a minimum of 80% of the contact time is to be in-person and on-campus with, in this case, the other 20%**

¹ We currently have 61 international approved off campus study requests, however Tier 4 visa students are now required by the Home Office to enter the UK by 30th June 2022 and continue their studies in-person on campus.

² We are currently developing additional guidance around accessibility requirements (e.g., lecture captions) and this will be provided in a separate document later in the semester.

being online synchronous sessions and/or asynchronous online sessions that complement or add to the on-campus activity.

Modules can have a maximum of 100% of the contact time to be in-person and on-campus learning.

If staff want to have less than 80% of the contact time to be in-person on-campus learning, this needs to be approved by the School DTL.^{3 4}

All contact time (in-person and online) is to be timetabled. Further, for students on tier 4 visas there are home office attendance monitoring requirements which mean that the in-person on-campus activity must be spread out through the academic year, not front or backloaded in the respective semester(s).

These existing modules will not need to be reapproved, but please see the QA/validation section below for further required action in preparation for next academic year.

Note: regarding the use of live-streaming across our Wrexham and Bangor campuses for our health and medical modules, this is permitted because the students are present on-campus in-person at either Wrexham and Bangor, and students will not be provided with the link to watch the live-stream remotely.

Distance / online modules

The modules are designed to provide a fully online learner experience. These pedagogically informed modules should include **high-quality lecture recordings** and **online resources developed specifically for online learning**, should embrace the notion of 'presence' rather than contact hours **with an online learning community developed**. These modules may offer synchronous and/or asynchronous online sessions and as such are appropriate for students wanting to complete their course on-line or off-campus. It is expected that distance/online modules for 2022/23 have already been validated, however please see the QA/validation section below for further required action in preparation for next academic year. New distance learning/online modules will need to go through our

³ We are working on this process.

⁴ Although previously WG and HEFCW have not been prescriptive regarding the balance of in-person and on-campus activity, moving forward we expect there will be greater scrutiny of this balance by WG/HEFCW and across the HE sector.

normal validation process for 2023/24, see the Beyond academic year 2022/23 section below for further detail.

Future development – blended learning modules

We recognise some staff will have developed modules over the past two years in-line with sector best practice for **blended learning** modules. These modules are designed to include a combination of online and on-campus activities to enhance the learner experience, may include a combination of synchronous, in-person sessions, synchronous online sessions and/or asynchronous online sessions using for example flipped and/or rotational models. Online and on-campus sessions are carefully planned to be complementary, so that each mode enhances and enriches the other, with the contact time tending to be on a 50/50 ratio for in-person versus online. **Note simply live streaming an on-campus session does not constitute a blended learning module.** We do not want to stifle these best practice modules by only offering the above two module delivery modes as our primary offer, but at the same time we need to ensure that blended learning modules are pedagogically appropriate, have been considered from a quality assurance perspective and fit within “traditional” rather than blended learning **programmes**⁵. Thus, if staff do want their modules to be reapproved as blended learning modules for September 2022/3, they are to contact their School DTL in the first instance to discuss whether the module is to be taken forward for reapproval as a blended learning module. For Sept 2022/3, these modules are likely to be the exception rather than the rule. While these modules offer online sessions, students are expected to attend on-campus sessions and/or complete some on-campus assessments and exams. As such, these modules are not designed/appropriate for individuals wanting to complete their entire course on-line or off-campus. For these modules, the recording of lectures is a requirement, however due to the nature of the learning activities our recommendation is that on-campus sessions will not be lived streamed (see Appendix 1 below), thus hybrid teaching for these modules will not exist for next academic year. All contact time (in-person and online) is to be timetabled.

⁵ Students with a tier 4 visa are NOT permitted to study a **programme** via blended learning. That said, the Home Office has recently conducted a survey exploring blended learning models, so there is perhaps movement in this regard. However, we have yet to received guidance/requirements for next academic year.

Note: In the event of another UK pandemic / lockdown, all modules not subject to external accrediting bodies (e.g., health and medicine) will be pivoted to online modules, with synchronous and asynchronous activities recommended.

QA & validation process for already validated 22/23 modules/programmes

Staff will consider the document within their QA1 and QA2 forms, with the SLIC process used to gain student feedback at a detailed level.. Note however that modules intended for delivery as blended (for 22/23) will be scrutinised through a quality enhancement blended learning panel⁶ with external assessor advice. New online/distance modules (for 23/24) must be validated as such; see [Guidelines for the approval of new modules](#). Taken together, through this process we will ensure quality assurance while making deliberate steps to improve our teaching practices through quality enhancement.

All modules, regardless of mode should adhere to the [academic quality and standards procedures of Bangor University](#). Comprehensive guidance can be found in the [Code of Practice for Programme Approval, Monitoring and Review](#).

Beyond academic year 2022/23

Discussion has taken place with staff about the development of future blended learning and distance learning programmes, which we are fully supportive of. As we consider these types of programmes as a core offer for the future, to ensure that they are pedagogically sound and market-driven, we will need to define what blended learning and distance learning are at a programme level, how our blended learning/distance modules fit together for these programmes and establish who we are delivering to and in which subject areas. These new programmes will need to be validated in line with [Bangor University policy](#). We look forward to further discussion and development of these programmes.

⁶ We are working on this process.

Appendix 1: Options appraisal for use of live-streaming academic year 2022/23.

The purpose of this document is to evaluate the value of incorporating live streaming of our on-campus lectures for next academic year, and to provide a recommendation. Irrespective of the recommendation, in all cases, students will have access to an online virtual environment (Blackboard Ultra), where they may access: Information about the module (including learning outcomes, module content, and contact details); Assignment guidelines; Module materials (e.g., lecture slides, seminar worksheets/handouts); Reading lists, and; Lecture recordings (in line with existing BU policy). Three options are evaluated in Table 1.

Table 1. *Scoring matrix for three live-streaming options. **

Consideration	Option A On-campus, synchronous lecture delivery with no live-streaming.	Option B On-campus, synchronous lecture with live-streaming for students who have been approved for off-campus study.	Option C On-campus, synchronous lecture with live-streaming for all students (no need for off-campus approval).
Ability to meet programme learning outcomes			
Ability to meet PSRB requirements			
Delivery of good degree outcomes and Value Added			
Allows students to learn in a location of their choice (flexibility of location)			
Allows students to learn at a time of their choice (flexibility of time)			

Delivers high quality student experience	Green	Red	Red
Deliverable through existing or acquirable learning technology	Green	Green	Green
Ensures good staff working experience	Green	Light Green	Red
Requires no additional staff training to achieve	Light Green	Yellow	Yellow
Maintains staff workload	Green	Red	Red
Maximizes student retention	Light Green	Light Green	Red
Timetable complexity/change needed	Green	Green	Green
Ensures QAA compliance	Green	Light Green	Yellow
Ensures CMA compliance	Green	Light Green	Yellow
Cost of delivery above current costs	Light Green	Light Green	Yellow
Maintains community and partner relations	Green	Green	Light Green

* The table refers to on-campus, technology-enhanced modules and blended learning modules.

Green	Best option/outcome/facilitator
Light Green	Allows outcomes to be achieved, facilitates
Yellow	Considered neutral in terms of effect- if carefully planned for
Red	Makes desired outcomes difficult to achieve, overall negative effect
Dark Red	Worst option/outcome, fails to facilitate

Recommendation

Based upon the consideration analysis, we would recommend that ***Option A*** for 2022-23 for on-campus lectures, that is no live-streaming for next academic year. The inclusion of live-streaming does provide an additional element of flexibility for the learner, however this option also creates additional barriers and risks, as identified in the scoring matrix. However, there will be flexibility via the inclusion of lecture recordings, allowing students to further aid their learning at a time and in a location convenient to them. Additionally, due to the on-going pandemic in other countries and possible travel restrictions, we may still have off-campus study requests for International student next academic year, thus we need to have lectures recorded for these students.

End of document.