Programme Leader

Programme design is a central theme of the 2015-2020 Learning and Teaching Strategy. Although all staff who teach participate in design of learning and teaching, for every programme of study there should be someone whose concern is the programme as a whole as experienced by students. This person is the Programme Leader. Every programme has a single leader, but a single person can lead more than one programme.

There are four key areas of responsibility for programme leaders, described below. Departments may invest additional responsibilities in line with how teaching is operationalised and managed locally, and should provide programme leaders with appropriate authority and sufficient time to do all parts of their role.

Programme leadership entails:

1. **Responsibility for the overall design of the programme.**
   In line with the principles of the York Pedagogy, programme leaders ensure that:
   a. The programme is defined by between 6 to 8 challenging but realistic outcomes which are empowering to students and which accurately portray the distinctiveness of the course of study;
   b. Progression towards achievement of the programme outcomes is carefully and realistically charted through the component modules of the programme;
   c. Summative assessment is devised at programme-level to accurately and reliably measure student progression towards achievement of the programme learning outcomes;
   d. Student work, be that undertaken within classroom-based settings, through engagement with online activities or as a result of independent study, is planned so as to progressively support an increasing sophistication of learning or competence towards achievement of the programme learning outcomes;
   e. Incidents of contact between students and staff – whether synchronous or asynchronous, face-to-face or virtual – and opportunities for formative guidance propel student progression towards the achievement of programme outcomes.

2. **Responsibility for ongoing programme design, maintenance and improvement.**
   Programmes will be monitored, and developed where appropriate, to ensure they remain current and relevant. Programme leaders ensure that:
   a. Developments in University regulations and policy as they pertain to academic programmes are promptly assessed for impact and acted upon as necessary;
   b. Where the requirements of applicable Professional, Statutory and Professional Bodies change, or where other disciplinary guidance is modified (for example subject benchmark statements) this is appropriately reflected in the curriculum;
   c. Prevailing market conditions, including the requirements of employers, and the actions of key competitors are monitored and responded to as appropriate;
   d. A scholarly knowledge and understanding of both relevant cutting edge disciplinary research and how this research can be integrated into the curriculum is maintained;
   e. Programme documentation, whether student-facing or University-facing, is updated and made available in a timely manner.
3. Responsibility for monitoring the programme in operation.

Significant operational issues should be addressed effectively. Students should be provided with the opportunity to engage with a supported, but challenging and intellectually stimulating learning experience. Programme leaders are responsible for:

a. Monitoring patterns of student progression across the programme with a view to addressing issues where necessary;

b. Overseeing student evaluation data, be that from module evaluations, NSS or other sources and taking action, in collaboration with colleagues where appropriate, to address identified issues;

c. Ensuring recommendations made by the external examiner are given due consideration and acted upon where it is deemed appropriate;

d. Maintaining an informed awareness of the importance to student learning of the employability, sustainability, inclusivity, internationalisation and digital literacy agendas and ensuring these are given sufficient presence within the curriculum;

e. Evaluating the resource requirements of the programme (including staffing, timetabling, equipment, library resources etc.) and bringing resourcing issues to the attention of the head of department (or other relevant member of staff) where necessary.

4. Responsibility for the effective coordination of colleagues who contribute to the design and delivery of the programme.

The successful design, maintenance and delivery of a programme curriculum under the York Pedagogy is a collaborative enterprise but one that is directed, focused and organised. This means that programme leaders are responsible for:

a. Acting as academic lead for the programme and to the team of staff who contribute modules to the programme. This includes representing the programme at relevant departmental meetings and during the course of review processes such as annual programme review and periodic review and liaising on matters pertaining to the programme with other key Departmental officers such as the Chair of Board of Studies, Chair of Board of Examiners and Head of Department;

b. Cultivating an environment of collaboration and shared ownership by ensuring colleagues are involved in curriculum-decision making and providing appropriate opportunities for the programme team to consult and interact on issues that relate to programme development and delivery;

c. Organising the curriculum and co-ordinating colleagues in a way that is equitable and non-discriminatory;

d. Effectively managing and sustaining change and development and motivating colleagues with regard to their involvement with the programme;

e. Being a first point-of-call in mediating, assessing and solving problems relating to the design and delivery of the programme curriculum.