Effective curriculum design across the university:
what do academics, administrators and students need?

PiP at the University of Strathclyde

The PiP Project is part-funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) Institutional Approaches to Curriculum Design Programme. PiP is identifying the key processes associated with the design, documentation, support and implementation of curricula in higher education and developing ways of enhancing these processes using digital technologies.

http://www.principlesinpatterns.ac.uk/

What is Curriculum Design?

Disciplinary experts formulate a learning design specifying the teaching, learning and assessment activities that will be implemented in classes, modules, courses or programmes of study.

Designs are influenced by:

- ❑ Disciplinary context
- ❑ Year of study
- ❑ Class size
- ❑ Student needs

Design becomes reality when teachers interact with real students in real classrooms.

How do institutions influence Curriculum Design?

A complex mix of institutional processes influences curriculum design:

- ❑ University aspirations, strategies and policies
- ❑ People, rooms, equipment and resources
- ❑ Documentation, approval, quality assurance
- ❑ Information needs: registry, estates, library...

	Issues	Stakeholders	Representations
Task	Design influenced by the discipline. Designs might address specific local needs. Students need good information about the task design and their role.	Academic staff Students	Designs require relevance to the discipline. Designs need to show how they address needs. Information for students as important as that for staff.
Module	Need to include co-ordinated series of tasks. Multiple possible designs to address same local needs.	Academic staff Students Department Services (e.g. Registry)	Representations already formalised as part of university quality assurance processes but might not address educational needs effectively.
Programme	Lack of co-ordinated design across programmes. Little attention to holistic educational experience.	Academic staff Students Department/ Faculty Services (e.g. Registry)	Representations already formalised as part of university quality assurance processes but might not address educational needs effectively.

Curriculum Design Challenges

- ❑ Effective Curriculum Design should consider the relationship between tasks, modules and programmes and how these elements together create a meaningful educational experience.

- ❑ Most Curriculum Design is focused on discrete tasks or modules. However, many important educational ideas are best considered as part of a programme of study.

- ❑ Creating effective processes for the design of programmes may require significant changes to the working practices of academics and support staff.

- ❑ Academic and support staff need access to good information about effective designs that address university needs and aspirations.

University of **Strathclyde** Glasgow

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