

Requirements and Guidance for Blended Teaching and Learning Provision 2020/21 (Final)

The following details the structure of the UG and PGT teaching provision for 2020/21. At the moment it only applies to Semester A modules but, unless the situation radically changes, Semester B will be very similar. **Part I contains key requirements for all staff** and Part II contains guidance for module migration to blended learning.

Part I: Requirements

Timeline

As we as a School will be more stretched than usual it is important that as much of the preparation as possible is done in advance. This will make it easier to deal with unexpected problems (e.g. a staff member being ill, the country going into a second lockdown etc), and to provide support if needed.

- July 6th. Any timetabling requests not matching the 4x1 on separate days, and 3x1 on 1-2 days to be submitted to DoE.
- July 15th. All assessment structures not matching the 75%/25% split described below to be submitted to DoE. The exact structure of the 25% does not need to be confirmed until August 31st.
- August 10th. The new QMPlus pages are populated with the non-content material (e.g. module description/syllabus etc).
- **August 31st. The content for the first three weeks of the module must be in place.**
This includes all asynchronous material, lecture notes, the first coursework, and the learning timetable structure for these three weeks (what will be covered in which session). Material may be hidden but it must **all** be present. Additionally, for any planned synchronous lecture, detailed teaching plans – sufficient that, if needed, another lecturer could deliver the content *with minimal preparation* – must be posted on QMPlus.
- September 14th. Welcome week.
- **September 14th. The content for the first five weeks of the module should be in place.**
- September 21st. Teaching starts.
- During Semester A: Corresponding content detailed above for later weeks must be posted to QMPlus at least 4 weeks in advance of the delivery week.

We are aware that some staff will find the requirement to post material in advance both stringent and unnecessary. These requirements are part of the Education 3.1 policy, but we also believe that they are needed in the current circumstances.

If staff think they will not be able to meet the August 31st deadline they must let us know as soon as possible, and no later than 20 July so that we can think of support actions if necessary.

Lectures

For all UG modules (Levels 4-6) we will use the 4x1 structure outlined in the Town Hall meeting. For Level 7 modules we will use a 3x1 structure. The extra hour compared to our previous provision **must** include the more lecture side of tutorials (e.g., reviewing coursework solutions to some or all of the coursework, giving feedback on common mistakes, picking up on parts of the module the students have been finding difficult etc) but, depending on the module's structure, it

may also be possible to give extra examples and generally add space to the module. However, it is **not** to add content to the module.

We require the following

- for level 4-6, there should be synchronous activity in at least two of these sessions per week
- for level 7 only 1 session per week is required to have some synchronous activity
- Any synchronous activity in these sessions **must** be recorded and made available on the QMPlus page.
- Pre-recorded material does not need to be the full hour in length – you are encouraged to split the recordings into shorter pieces, and to give the students time to think about the material during the hour.
- **For each module the majority of the content must be available as video recordings either pre-recorded or a recording of a synchronous session.**

If you believe that is not appropriate for your module, then please discuss with DoE well in advance of the start of teaching.

To be clear: synchronous (i.e., “live”) activity can mean an online lecture or a slot where the lecturer is available for online discussion. Expecting students to watch a previous year’s QReview recording is **not** appropriate, and in most cases a new QReview recording would also not be suitable.

By default, for modules at Levels 4 and 5 these hours will be spread throughout the week, more like a “school timetable”, but at level 6 and 7 the hours will be more condensed: for level 6 spread over 3 days, and for level 7 spread over two days (but with no consecutive hours).

Lecture Notes

All modules Levels 3-7 (**including** Level 7) must have

- complete lecture notes
- model solutions to the coursework¹

available on the QMPlus page according to Timeline above. Furthermore,

- Lecture notes will be definitive on what was examinable and **must** make this explicit. **This is in contrast to the previous situation where lectures were definitive on what was examinable.**

Existing lecture notes may contain substantial non-examinable content – this is fine – but the non-examinable parts must be clearly and explicitly marked.

It is permissible to use a text book in place of lecture notes; with a few exceptions, it must be freely available as an e-book from the library and detailed guidance on which sections are examinable must be included on the QMPlus page.

Tutorials and Office hours.

We are required to offer some on-campus provision for students who wish to be on campus but this needs to be optional/enhancement material.

Level 4.

- For Year 1 modules there will be fortnightly tutorials in groups of about 12.

¹ It may be appropriate to omit solutions to a small number of questions such as discussion or extension questions.

- The tutor will be allocated one hour of marking for each hour of tutorial delivery.
- Both virtual and on-campus tutorials will be offered.
- Students will be timetabled a fixed tutorial for each module.

Level 5, 6 and 7.

For Levels 5 and 6 much of what we used to cover in tutorials we be covered by the new 4x1 structure so we intend to offer only 1 hour per week of tutorial sessions for each module (in addition to the 4x1), alternating online and on-campus. We may need to increase this provision if there is demand.

We will try to be flexible where staff are hesitant to come on to campus.

Assessment

- For modules at levels 4-6 the default assessment structure will be 5 fortnightly courseworks each worth 5% of the total mark, and an alternative assessment in January worth 75%.
- Modules will be allowed to differ from this pattern in minor ways² (e.g. 5 courseworks and 5 QMPlus quizzes, QMPlus quiz questions with solutions presented in a tutorial etc),

If you think your module needs a substantially different assessment structure (e.g., clear pedagogical need, programming, IFoA accreditation), please consult with the DoE.

- Each module will be allocated 1 hour of marking per fortnight per 15 students (which may be the lecturer's tutorial/marketing allocation). We know that online marking currently takes rather more than this, but hope improved equipment and streamlined procedures will make this practical.

For Level 7 modules our recommendation would be 25% midterm test and 75% alternative assessment as the default, but these modules are more variable so we are expecting to be flexible here.

Forums and Email

We propose that **all modules** use the forum as the primary route for student queries and that students who email get directed to the forum.

- In general we expect a response within 3 working days (essentially twice a week)
- For first year modules we would like the tutor to be the first point of contact and are looking at whether each tutor group can have its own forum

This has several advantages – the students see other people asking questions and will feel part of the cohort, the lecturer can point students to previous answers, other staff can respond to students if the lecturer is overloaded, and if the student is already visiting the QMPlus page they might see the answer to their question (e.g. when a coursework is due etc).

QMplus Template

There will be a University-wide QMPlus template for all modules, structured by week: <https://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=13656> for all modules (which is actually the University template). The key thing about the template is that it is structured by week: the page must make it very clear what a student is expected to do for the module each week.

² The exact structure of the 25% does not need to be confirmed until August 31st.

- Unless permission is obtained from DoE, staff must follow this template.
- The page must make it very clear what a student is expected to do for the module each week

The weekly structure does not mean that you need to split up the lecture notes – but, as a minimum, the QMPlus page must say things like “Sections 4.1-4.3 of the notes” under the appropriate week heading.

The reasons for requiring staff to follow the template is that differences between pages will increase the number of student email queries for **all** modules.

Mark, Boris and Alex
6th August 2020

Part II: Guidance

How students navigate their learning will largely be shaped by how we utilise the structure of the new QMPlus Template. There are 6 steps to (re)designing your module to be suitable for blended learning:

1. **Get acquainted with the new QMPlus Template you will be populating.**
2. **Perform Module Triage on Core Info, Content, Comms, Assessment, Feedback, and Revision.**
3. **Plan how you would like the semester to unfold for you and your students.**
4. **Create new content where relevant.**
5. **Populate QMPlus Template page when available.**
6. **Peer Feedback, TSL Review and Polish.**

Below we provide information and resources to help you with your redesign and migration. **All resources will be made available on the Staff Intranet, under the ‘Blended Learning Guidance – 2020/21’ Section:** <https://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=4268#section-1>.

STEP 1. Get acquainted with the new QMPlus Template you will be populating.

The new QMPlus Template³ mentioned in Part I has high overlap with the SMS Template. Note that template rollout will not be the same as the usual QMPlus rollover/archiving, so we will be migrating our existing module resources manually. As such,

- Download all 2019/20 course content to be used in 2020/21. There is no need to copy legacy items (previous notes, exams, etc.) other than those relevant for delivery of the 20/21 module.
- Copy/Paste any text from your sections that you have not downloaded.
- Alternatively, it may be possible to use the QMPlus “sharing cart” to move the items from the current page to the new page. See <https://elearning.qmul.ac.uk/guide/moving-content-around-with-the-sharing-cart/> and you may find this substantially quicker.

STEP 2. Perform a Module Triage on Core Info, Module Content, Communications, Assessment, Feedback, and Revision.

The University has created an extensive *QMPlus Baseline Standards/Module Triage Checklist* to help you use your *existing* QMPlus page to determine what you might need to create for populating the new template.

- Download the *Module Triage Checklist* from the Staff Intranet.
- Assess potential inclusion of each item from full list, based on relevance for your module.

Once you’ve taken inventory, you will likely need to plan and create new content that is suitable for online activity and engagement.

STEP 3. Plan how you would like the semester to unfold for you and your students.

A blended module may have very different engagement challenges than the ones we currently face.

- Your module is likely already split into 10-12 weeks of curriculum/learning objectives, so make sure everything you want to cover appears somewhere, and that it is in the right place.

³ A walkthrough of the main features appears here: <https://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=13606>.

- Determine how to adapt each section of your lectures. Should it be delivered live or pre-recorded? Could it be reworked into a guided reading, exercise sequence or something else?
- If you do identify topics for asynchronous delivery, note the weeks in which you expect them to appear; in those weeks, budget active sessions to support the independent work (e.g., a “key concepts” live tutorial/Q&A).
- Pre-recorded material does not need to be the full hour in length – you are encouraged to split the recordings into shorter pieces, and to give the students time to think about the material during the timetabled hour.
- Regular synchronous sessions do help with engagement, but active learning techniques other than standard live lectures can also be effective. These include⁴
 - Pauses in pre-recorded lectures for comprehension quizzes
 - “Think-Pair-Share.” activate prior knowledge, share ideas about content with peers
 - Polling. Use Mentimeter or QM clicker-style software to ask questions in Q&A sessions
 - Quizzes with common preconceptions as distractors (QMplus/live, individual/group)
 - Partial Outlines/PPTs provided for lecture (pre-recorded or live).

Further examples of how to adapt material to create interactive module content appear in the *Blended Course Construction Kit* on the Staff Intranet.

- Map out the changes from your current activities to your blended activities; one way to do this appears on p.5 in the *S&E Module Planning Tool Template* on the Staff Intranet.

Students welcome communications telling them which learning/curriculum objectives and outcomes will be met with the tasks of the week, and in particular which will be met by the synchronous/live activity. With this in mind,

- When planning activities, consider the timetable of the student. In a given week, the hours for your module may be combination of synchronous online lecture, pre-recorded video clip(s) followed by some synchronous activity, recommended time for students to watch pre-recorded lectures (possibly with the lecturer being available for online discussion during the hour), etc.
- Map out students’ weekly activities and create a study plan/directions detailing the tasks they are expected to undertake, what they are expected to have mastered, and by when this is meant to be done (e.g., “by the end of week X, you should be able to...”)
- Look for uneven segments in the plan, (e.g., content covered, interaction level, task variety, ...) and adjust accordingly.

STEP 4. Create new content where relevant.

Please consider the following when creating resources:

- The first (teaching) week is exceptionally important in setting the stage for engagement throughout the remainder of the semester; it is the first instance in which you can set expectations, demonstrate how the module will be run, highlight particularly important resources and generally get students excited for the module! The first week could contain
 - a welcome video and introductions for supporting staff,
 - walkthrough for students on navigating resources you’ve made available,
 - a pre-requisites self-assessment/Coursework 0 to consolidate core prior knowledge.
- When editing notes, creating coursework questions, etc., please consider enhancing your module by including mathematical interconnections, applications, and (where appropriate) employability and careers-related resources.

⁴ List excerpted from <https://teaching.berkeley.edu/active-learning-strategies>.

- **Assessment and Feedback.** Create online assessment activities that help to check student engagement and progression through your module. The quiz facility is relatively simple to set and use and automatically marks all scripts. If you spend a bit more time setting things up and building a question bank, it will even provide automatic feedback. If you do not want to build your own question bank, check what is already available on WeBWork⁵.
- **There is a step-by-step WeBWork. users guide available on the Staff Intranet. the guide provides all the basic information a module organiser needs to get a WeBWork page up and running for their module. This includes how to create a WeBWork page, how to create a coursework set, how to import a classlist roster and also some basics on how to edit/create webwork problems (with links to more in depth resources).**

Please consider posting some advice on strategies and support available for students to get back on track after falling behind. This could include:

- QMPlus formative checkpoint quizzes for which automated feedback would be easy to construct (e.g., questions where students review definitions: “Have you reviewed def x, y, z?” Feedback signposts section of the Lecture Notes to be reviewed)
- QMPlus reflective quizzes which can be used as checkpoints to “self-measure progress” (e.g., set quizzes “How confident are you on doing a, b, c?” in Week 2 vs. Week 8; can still give automated feedback to support)
- Links to Student Support, Counselling Services, DDS, etc.

STEP 5. Populate the QMPlus Template page (when available).

For each week, you will now have planned and prepared content to upload. Depending on your lecture style and preference, the content for your 4x1/3x1 hour sessions should include

- Topics and Objectives for the week and a Study Plan (latter also preferably weekly)
- Synchronous/Live activities (e.g. lectures/webinars, group discussions, etc.)
- Asynchronous activities (e.g., quizzes, readings, pre-recorded lectures, revision videos, etc.)
- Feedback in some form (either individual or in the synchronous session)
- Additional supporting materials (documents, links, downloadable resources, etc.)
- Check that you have at least 2 (live) contact hours and that you have satisfied the DoE Requirements from Part I.

STEP 6. Peer Feedback, TSL Review and Polish.

When you are ready, you can ask a colleague to look over your QMPlus page for feedback. Teaching Stream Leaders will be going over all the QMPlus pages for their streams starting on **15 Aug**; TSLs will be using the Module Triage checklist to look over each module.

Additional Resources are available (and being regularly updated) for your perusal on the Staff Intranet. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need support with your (re)design and migration.

SB and DKA
06 July 2020

⁵ WeBWork is an open-source web-based homework system specifically designed for mathematics, including question banks for common UG modules containing individualized multiple choice and free-response numerical answers, mathematical expressions, etc.
(https://www.maa.org/external_archive/columns/launchings/launchings_04_09.html)