

# CURRICULUM FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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## **Purpose**

Curriculum for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (C21C) is an initiative designed to meet four objectives:

- (i) to enable UHI to deliver as much of its higher education as is possible to all its Academic Partner campuses and in where appropriate beyond ;
- (ii) to enhance the learning experience by blending learning methods in a manner sympathetic to the content of the curriculum;
- (iii) to release staff time to provide space for reflection, scholarship and in some cases research;
- (iv) to eliminate duplication and deliver a maximum number of programmes as pathways sustained by a minimum number of modules and HN units and thereby to create greater efficiencies in curriculum delivery.

The project builds upon the work started before the current economic crisis and the subsequent threat to public expenditure in general and post-compulsory education in particular. With the onset of the economic downturn C21C has taken on greater urgency as part of the UHI partnership's response to the challenges posed by significant reductions in public spending. This short communication is designed to explain what C21C is and equally importantly what it is not.

## **Aims**

Enhancement of the student experience via the concentration of resources, shared development, wider access, a broader range of approaches to learning and greater consistency / equivalence across the network.

Increased sustainability of UHI's curriculum and delivery via increased co-operation in the development and delivery of a more networked curriculum.

The initiative has been endorsed by the UHI Executive Board (UHI and Academic Partner Principals) and is now being implemented through a range of interrelated projects, programmes and changes in practice. The attached synopsis outlines the overall framework which was recently approved by Academic Council. There is still much detail to be finalised and this work is being carried out at various levels by the Faculties, Academic Partner managers, Subject Network Leaders, lecturing staff and others.

The aims of C21C are being pursued primarily via curriculum rationalisation (at HN, degree and postgraduate levels), greater use of blended learning and more networked delivery wherever consistent with a good student experience. By blended learning we mean: *"A considered approach that selects from a range of traditional face-to-face methods and e-learning technologies to facilitate student engagement, develop independent learners and enhance the learning experience"*. As this Academic Council definition makes clear there is no agenda or desire to make every unit, module or programme online, this would be contrary to UHI's mission and strategy. There is however an urgency to move to a more blended and networked approach to our delivery for reasons of enhanced student experience and greater curriculum sustainability.

The diagram below summarises the changes which C21C seeks to bring about. In Figure 1 you can see a representation of the current situation with teaching staff (blue and red) at each academic partner teaching the entirety of a module or unit to the students in that partner. This means that not only are there often small classes, each lecturer has to develop and deliver their own materials and there is often variability between the experiences of students from site to site. Figure 2 shows the revised situation whereby one lecturer (red) may deliver certain parts of the module by distance means to all students with lecturers in each partner (blue) delivering the remainder face-to-face.

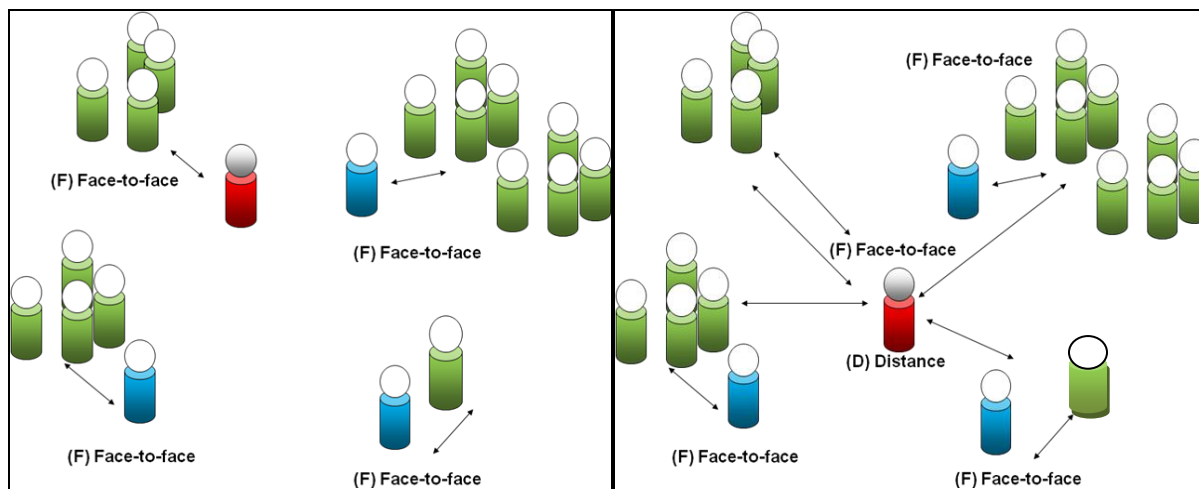


Figure 1: Current situation

Figure 2: Revised situation

The advantages of the revised situation include, greater consistency of experience, the ability to concentrate development resource on teaching materials, greater interaction between sites, a reduction in duplicated effort and more sustainable class sizes for at least some of the module or unit delivery.

### ***The Five Main Initiatives***

To achieve these changes requires two elements: the development of staff and materials for blended delivery and a framework of policies, systems and funding to support them. The attached synopsis outlines the framework currently being developed to deliver this support and which comprises five main initiatives.

1. Revised curriculum architecture (undergraduate)
2. Allocation of networked modules and units
3. Networked student support
4. Networked timetabling
5. Revised Internal Funding Mechanism

The process of developing staff to develop materials suitable for distance delivery (whether by video-conference, the web or other media) cannot happen overnight but it has begun already and will continue over the coming years.

## ***Next steps***

1. **Curriculum Rationalisation** The Faculties will be working with Academic Partner managers, lecturers and others to produce rationalised schemes which make use of a greater proportion of shared units and modules to deliver the curriculum. These schemes will form the core of a sustainable curriculum and will be the focus of planning in the future. The planning for this is underway with consultation events leading to the development of initial plans by the end of the calendar year. N.B. the new schemes will comprise both HN and degree programmes. The Subject Network Leaders are undertaking a process of consultation with Academic Partner managers during the autumn of 2010 and will present proposals based on this consultation later in the year.
2. **HNs, Staff and Material Development** The Faculties have access to ESF funding to develop materials to transform approximately 70 HN units from across the curriculum into a blended format. A key aspect of this is that the teaching staff involved will be themselves developed (via a new online module in Blended Delivery) so that they will have the skills to maintain and further develop the modules that they are involved with. This work will largely take place in the spring of 2011 for delivery starting in the academic year 2011/12. This is in addition to the implementation of shared practice for all programmes around such issues as assessment and the use of the VLE as a focus for student communication and information.
3. **Further detailed work on the framework and its implementation** This will include modelling the implications of curriculum changes and funding reforms on income, developing service agreements for the various roles together with their funding. This work is vital to ensure that the changes are sustainable and resourced. There remain some issues to be dealt with in detail and aspects which will require be piloting and testing before wider adoption.

## **Some initial questions which have been raised about C21C include:**

Q. Does this apply to HNs as well as degrees?

A. HNs are a major part of our curriculum and therefore very much part of the C21C initiative.

Q. Does this mean everything is going on line?

A. Absolutely not, the UHI definition of blended learning (see page 1) includes face-to-face delivery where appropriate to the student experience.

Q. Is this all just to save money?

A. No, the academic and student experience rationale has always been there for many if not all of these developments; however the economic situation has greatly enhanced the case for the improved curriculum sustainability which they also bring.

***If you have any questions, suggestions or comments on C21C  
please email them to***

***c21c@uhi.ac.uk***

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## Synopsis of C21C Framework

Proposal	1. Revised Curriculum Architecture	2. Allocation of Networked Modules and Units	3. Networked Student Support	4. Networked Timetabling	5. Revised Internal Funding Mechanism
<b>Synopsis</b>	<p>I. Curriculum based on a revised definition of a scheme which will include SQA HNs and degrees</p> <p>II. Each scheme to operate within agreed limits for the mean students per module/unit metric mean aggregate class-size (MAC).</p> <p>III. Each scheme to demonstrate: progression opportunities, student choice and most efficient use of unit / modules.</p> <p>IV. A planned move to 20 credit modules for all undergraduate degrees beginning the academic year 2012-13.</p>	<p>I. Module/unit teams will consist of a leader and as many staff as are required to support delivery of both the distance and face to face elements.</p> <p>II. Funding to be allocated to the module/unit leader for overall Q.A. and Blackboard operation with the remaining funding being distributed to delivering staff in proportion to their contribution.</p> <p>III. Modules and units will be evaluated for the elements which can be offered by distance means without compromising the student experience.</p> <p>IV. Module and unit leadership will be allocated in an open manner against agreed criteria.</p>	<p>I. Every student will be allocated to a Home AP.</p> <p>II. Each student will be allocated to a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) who will normally be employed by the Home AP.</p> <p>III. Each Home AP will have a Hosting manager who will be responsible for provision of the prescribed hosting services.</p>	<p>I. SITS to used to operate a timetable of networked teaching events e.g. VC classes.</p> <p>II. Networked timetabling will be piloted in 2010-11 with a limited number of programmes.</p> <p>III. A shared timetabling approach will be universally adopted for networked programmes from 2011-12.</p> <p>IV. An agreed approach (shared service?) to be taken for the administration of the networked timetable.</p>	<p>i. Create a revised internal funding mechanism which enables networking and supports the aims of the C21C initiative.</p> <p>ii. Model, carry out sensitivity analysis using the revised funding mechanism on the revised curriculum to optimise the allocation parameters (realism &amp; minimal turbulence).</p> <p>iii. Ensure that SITS and associated business process are capable of supporting the proposal captured in the C21C framework.</p> <p>iv. Implement revisions for academic year 2011/12.</p>
<b>Links to Strategic Objectives</b>	1, 3, 8,12,13 and 17	8, 11, 12, 13 and 17	8 and 17	1, 2, 8, 13 and 17.	2, 13 and 17.
<b>Timing of Implementation</b>	(i), (ii) and (iii) start of academic year 2011/12. (iv) start of academic year 2012/13	(i) and (ii) to be approved by EB in August 2010. (iii) to be completed by Spring 2011.	(i), (ii) and (iii) will come into effect academic year 2011/12.	(ii) for Autumn 2011, (i), (iii) and (iv) for Autumn 2012.	(i), (ii) and (iii) will be complete by Spring of 2011.
<b>Next Steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic council to consider proposal</li> <li>Faculties to work with APs via SN to develop scheme-based curriculum</li> <li>MAC models to be created based on these schemes and targets (and tolerances) to be agreed by APC.</li> <li>Detailed planning for 20 credit move to begin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalise Module Leader role, specifications, operating conditions and criteria for allocation.</li> <li>Detailed planning work to be carried out by Faculties, HR working group and AP managers.</li> <li>Detailed model to return to APC for approval/ modification.</li> <li>Faculties to work with APs via SN to implement approved/revised model.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C21C SLWG (plus others as detailed in paper) to finalise the roles, specifications, service levels and operating conditions of the Home AP, PAT and Hosting Manager.</li> <li>Hosting Managers to be approved.</li> <li>SITS to be set up to record the roles discussed in the proposal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out option appraisal (CBT vs Diet) between August and November 2010 recommendation to EB.</li> <li>Create "a timetable for the timetable"between August and November 2010 recommendation to EB.</li> <li>Discuss the nature of a shared timetabling service at An Comann.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estimate actual costs of delivering the elements to be funded to ensure that the model parameters are within the bounds of realism.</li> <li>Model and carry out sensitivity analysis using the revised curriculum and the proposed funding mechanism.</li> <li>Take results of modelling to EB in Spring 2011.</li> </ul>