

# ENhance Quick Guides

Student Focus

Edinburgh Napier  
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Enhancement

## Theme: Student Focus

### ENhance Curriculum Framework – what is ENhance?

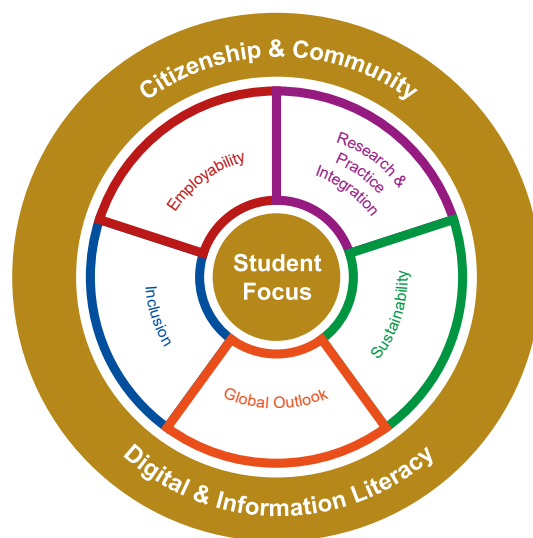
The ENhance Curriculum Framework supports curriculum design, development enhancement at the programme level by identifying successful practices and areas for future enhancement of curriculum. At the heart of ENhance is Student Focus, an approach to curriculum design that foregrounds student-centredness in programme development and enhancement evidenced in learning, teaching and assessment that engage students in their learning and respond to their needs as learners and support their development.

The Student Focus on the ENhance Framework emphasises curriculum as an interactive process between students and teachers that supports knowledge, skills, and personal development. It aims to create flexible curricula that adapt to student needs and societal goals, encouraging reflection and enhancement across academic programmes.

With Student Focus as the guiding principle in the heart of ENhance, we are encouraged to think about what student focus looks like in our programmes.

### What is Student Focus in the Curriculum?

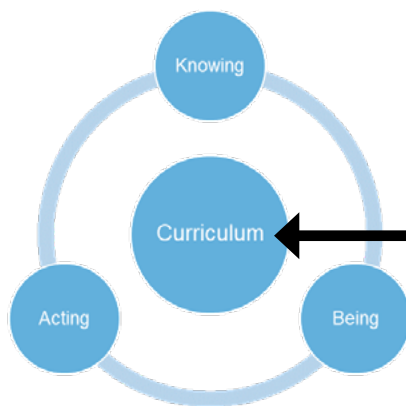
Curriculum is often considered to mean programme content, or an arrangement of prescribed learning outcomes concerned with the development of defined subject knowledge, seen as a straightforward matter of content, purpose and organisation (Gravett, Taylor & Fairchild 2021, 7). These views often focus on the development of subject knowledge and transferable skills thought to be attained and developed in an unproblematic, linear manner by a stereotypical learner. However, curriculum and providing a student focus is far more than this.



For the purposes of the ENhance framework and Student Focus, 'curriculum' is viewed as closely aligned with Weller's (2019, 59) view of curriculum. This view sees curriculum as the critical engagement between learners and teachers about how learning happens in the discipline in a way that that is inclusive and responsive to student needs to enable learning. Our Student Focus view extends to see the curriculum as a dynamic process of interactions between students and staff in co-constructing knowledge towards the development and transformation of students themselves (Weller 2019).

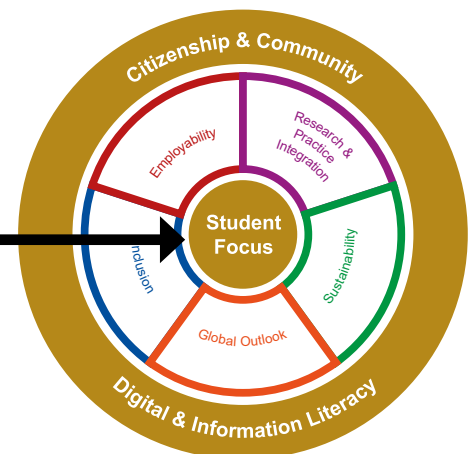
Barnett and Coate (2005) propose that curriculum is best viewed as a form of engagement and the design of spaces and opportunities for student learning. They propose a student-centred view of curriculum as comprising the opportunities for learning towards students' development in the dimensions of knowing, acting and being. 'Curriculum' and Student Focus in this sense is very concerned with the nature of opportunities for students to engage with the programme, one another and with staff, and with how students can engage in their own development in various ways through learning, teaching and assessment.

- 'Curriculum as a form of engagement'
- Design of spaces and opportunities - not 'filling in'
- Underpinning theory/pedagogy.
- Culture of partnership and co-creation
- Shared understanding of 'curriculum'



Barnett & Coate, 2005

Flipped, active enquiry-based approaches to learning.



A student focussed curriculum should provide spaces and opportunities for engagement, through learning, teaching and assessment, that consider not just what students need to know, but what they need to be able to do and who they need to be or can become (Graham, 2025). This is an idea of curriculum with a student focus, centred on learners as whole persons, where higher education is more than just learning a subject, it is about the "formation of human being and becoming" through learning (Barnett and Coate, 2005).

Student Focus in learning, teaching and assessment starts with the curriculum and how learners and their opportunities for engagement and development are considered in the design of programmes and

their learning, teaching and assessment approaches. Active enquiry-based approaches to learning and teaching help can engage learners and support their development across dimensions in their collaboration with peers and application of knowledge in task or problem-based activities.

Related to assessment, approaches and methods of assessment that are authentic align with active learning to engage students with each other and their own learning and development. Authentic assessment allows students to apply their knowledge in different contexts and allows them to connect their learning to the wider world of life and work. In this way, an active learning pedagogy supported by an authentic assessment approach can help students develop their agency, employability and sense of themselves in terms of their becoming and being, their sense of autonomy, responsibility and sense of self in relation to the world (Graham, 2025). Authentic assessment engages learners in tasks relevant to social issues, professional expectations and allows student to make connections between their lives and learning experiences (Brown and Sambell 2021). As a student-focused approach to assessment, authentic assessment promotes students' development of skills whilst providing 'agency to students which helps them to continuously connect what they are learning – ideas to thinking, principles to problems, theory to practice, learning to life'.

## Prompt questions

The following prompt questions should help you identify how your programme is student-focussed:

- **Who are your learners** and what are their **characteristics, pre-existing experience and knowledge** are they coming with, and what are their **learning needs**?
- How is the programme designed (even though using existing modules) to **meet the learning needs of students** – e.g. topics, modules and the focus of the programme and how it has been designed and why.
- Do your learning, teaching, assessment approaches (and student support) **meet their needs**?
- What is the learning and teaching approach on the programme and its modules and how do you **engage with your students through learning and teaching**?
  - For example, **how do they learn?** Is this through lectures, workshops/tutorials with tasks and activities, in practical labs, computer lab/studio work, or online webinars? What do these **learning experiences provide** students with and **what are they be doing** here, e.g. are they engaged and active, reading or listening?
- How do you **incorporate student feedback and dialogue** in the programme?
- In what ways does your programme **offer choice** to your students?

- How does your programme's assessment approach provide opportunities for students to **collaborate through assessment** and **develop communication, collaboration and critical thinking**?
- Does your **programme's assessment approach** incorporate assessment methods that allow students to **apply their knowledge and develop skills and competencies** expected of graduates of the discipline?
- How do you get to know your students (and **their motivations/expectations**) within the programme?
- To what extent will you work with **students as partners** in the programme (e.g. its learning and teaching)?

## Examples of Practice

Dr Ellis Urquhart's 'Student Focus' Case Study demonstrates a curriculum development example with enhancement made to the Global Service Management module resulting from an Active Learning Pilot and integrated approach to curriculum development using the ENACT model. See [Ellis' poster](#) and [video reflection where he describes further enhancements](#) (see 31mins).

ENhance Case Study colleagues from across the university have shared exemplary practice of their evidencing of the ENhance themes. You can [access these case studies in their various formats](https://intranet.napier.ac.uk/academic-and-student-resources/learning-design-and-support/enhance-curriculum-framework) on the ENU intranet: <https://intranet.napier.ac.uk/academic-and-student-resources/learning-design-and-support/enhance-curriculum-framework>

To arrange a curriculum development workshop, engage in the ENACT process in preparation for ILR or new programme development (or module review sessions) and for any further information, please contact Dr Cameron Graham, Associate Professor (Curriculum Design): [c.graham@napier.ac.uk](mailto:c.graham@napier.ac.uk)

## References

Barnett, R., & Coate, K. (2005). Engaging the Curriculum in Higher Education. Berkshire: Open University Press.

Brown, S. and Sambell, K. (2021) A Step-By-Step Guide to Designing More Authentic Assessments. The Watt Works Guides, 31. Learning & Teaching Academy, Heriott-Watt University.

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