



How are we responding to flexible learning?

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Notion of Flexibility

- Buzz word
- “wonderfully vague like freedom, peace or democracy, we are all in favour of it, even if we do not agree on what it means”
- Flexibility in HE
 - Learning & Provision
 - Access
 - ICT
 - Life long learning
 - Employability patterns of staff



University of Greenwich

- Britain's second oldest polytechnic, 1890
- Woolwich
- Pioneering country's first part-time and sandwich courses
- ~35,000 students
 - 23,000 on three campuses
 - 2,700 in Partner colleges
 - 8,000 in overseas and private home colleges
 - 1,300 in networks e.g. Lifelong Learning Sector



Flexible Learning

- Aims to attract and meet the needs of a wide range of students and stakeholders
- Make full use of learning technology to enhance learning and teaching
- UoG strategic plan “to offer flexible programmes through choice of pace, place and mode of learning”



Flexible Learning - access

- Broad entry requirements for ug programmes to recruit non-traditional students (~40% of UoG ug students enter with A levels)
- BUT progression rates, completion, success do vary depending on the entry qualifications and background
- Implications for student support, programme design, WP agenda and recruitment



Flexible Learning – progression 2008/09

- 36% of students unsuccessful on the Foundation year
- Relationship between UCAS points and success

UCAS tariff	% unsuccessful
1-120	19.1
121-240	14.7
241-360	10.9

- Gender, BME correlations, but not social class



Flexible Learning – access (cont)

- Credit accumulation and transfer
 - APCL (Accreditation of prior certificate learning)
 - APEL (Accreditation of prior experiential learning)
- Direct entry e.g. Foundation degree to the final year of a Bachelors degree
 - Bridging programme
 - Success rates (HEFCE study)
- Access programmes
- Progression agreements



Flexible Learning – pace of study

- FT to PT. PT. BUT how flexible are we/can we be? Balance of flexible participation with flexible working
- Accelerate study – 2 year honours degrees
- Use of VLE (blended learning). Access via Portal for both on and off campus students



Greater HE coverage to meet local demand and requirements of overseas partners



Flexible Learning – On-line distance learning

- E.G. Biomed online aimed at biomedical scientists in hospital labs. Supported Open Learning in Business
- Advantages
 - Study anywhere
 - No wasted time for travelling. ↓CO2 footprint
 - Study when you want, balance life, work other commitments
- But does it suit everyone? Lack of face to face contact (NSS surveys). ?Non-traditional students



Flexible Learning – technology enhancements

- Collaborative learning
- Podcasting
- Computer Aided Assessment and Feedback
- E-portfolio
- Web 2.0



Flexible Learning – work-based learning

- Partnership learning – work closely with employers and partners to make sure programmes provide the learning that employers want.
- Active learning by doing
- Foundation degrees, sandwich placements, internships, apprenticeships, applied professional studies



Flexible Learning – lifelong learning

- CPD
- Leitch, Higher Level Skills Strategy, Higher Ambitions
- Short-courses, block mode delivery, accumulation over time towards a qualification



Flexible Learning – UG-Flex project

- Aims to delivery greater flexibility in the context of curriculum design.
- Focus on improving systems and business processes that facilitate choice in how students participate in learning and ensure that they have a high quality learning experience.

UG-Flex Project Scope VERSION 2 – PROGRESS AND PRIORITISATION

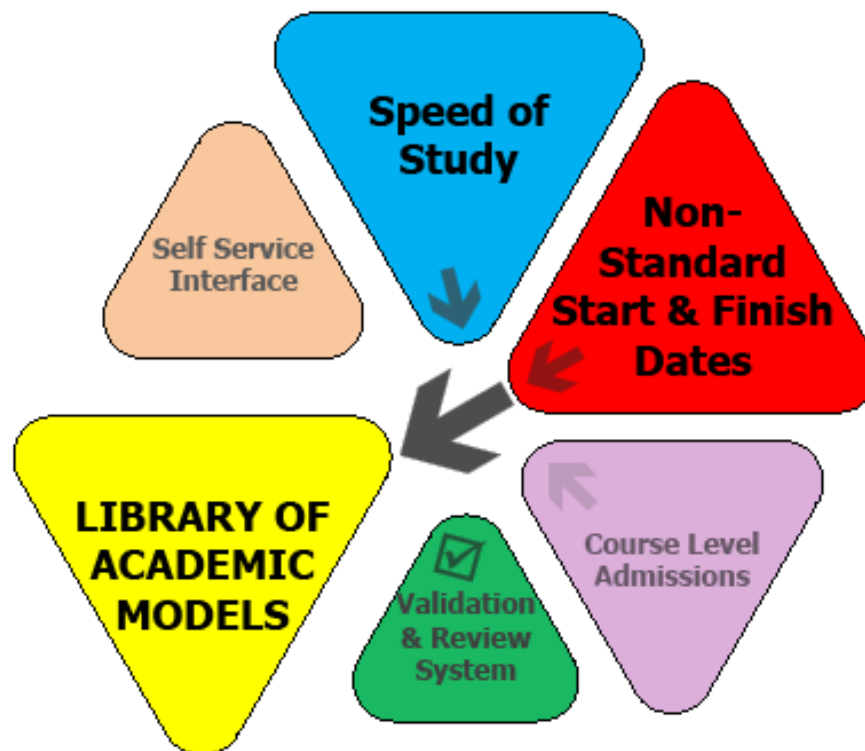
(May 2010)

UG-Flex aims to reveal & enhance the University of Greenwich's curriculum development processes in order to support a more agile and diverse curriculum, underpinned by integrated systems.

The primary driver is the University's strategic aim to sustainably increase efficient & effective flexible & part-time learning provision in a changing market place.

The Six Areas of Investigation

Essential Requirements



Engage With



Awareness Of





Flexible Learning – Graduate Attributes

The proposal

University of Greenwich graduates should be:

1. Creative and enterprising
2. Scholarly and self-reliant
3. Cross-culturally and international aware
4. Collaborative and socially competent



Flexible Learning – Future Directions

1. Recognise the need for boundaries
 1. Systems and processes
 2. Core qualities for all our graduates (attributes)
2. Seeking excellence
 1. Enhancing entry standards
 2. Enhancing curriculum development
 3. Improving the quality of teaching
 4. Improving completion rates
 5. Improving success – degrees awarded, employability



Flexible Learning – Future Directions

3. Widening participation v flexibility
 1. Improving access to HE for young people and adults who have the potential to benefit.
 2. Raising aspirations and having the expectation of success.
 3. Supporting them pre- and post-arrival.
 4. Recognise the diverse entry qualifications in designing the curriculum.



Flexible Learning – Conclusions

- Understand the drivers – pragmatic response to external factors versus we do this to improve the student experience.
- Not to lose sight of our roots:
Raise aspirations
Set challenging expectations
Aim to ensure no student fails that we enrol
- BUT we need to deal with the perception of low quality.