



Utrecht University



UMC Utrecht

Step-by-step guide  
to **course design**

# Introduction course design guide



## What is this guide for?

You have an idea for a new course or want to redevelop an existing course. This guide supports you in the design process. In nine steps you will get started with your course aim, learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment. You integrate educational principles and determine the way in which you want to offer the course components.



## Why should I use it?

The design is the backbone of your course, where constructive alignment, alignment between learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment, is crucial. Following the step-by-step guide leads to a clear and complete course design. This supports you in developing your course content.



## How should I use the guide?

Following the steps leads you to the course design form. It is recommended to go back and forth between the steps when designing the course. You can do this by clicking on the steps at the bottom of each page.



## Where can I get support?

If you have any questions or require any support using this step-by-step guide, please contact [teachingsupport@uu.nl](mailto:teachingsupport@uu.nl). For content feedback, please contact Anne-Petra Rozendal, [a.p.rozendal@umcutrecht.nl](mailto:a.p.rozendal@umcutrecht.nl).

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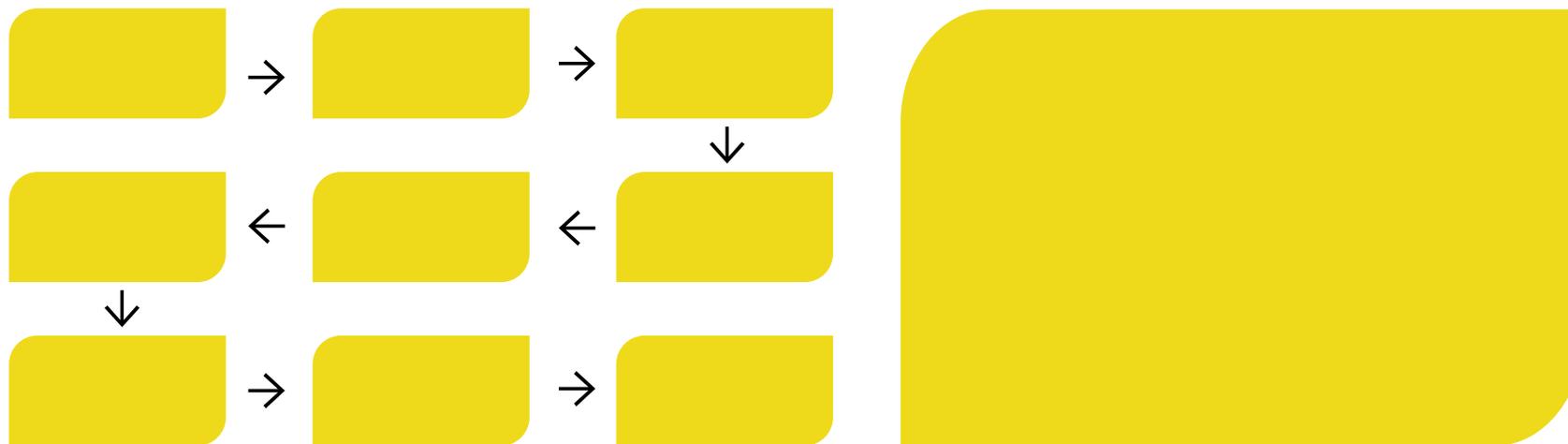
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# STEP 1 Course design process

The nine steps of the course design process help you to think about your course aim, learning objectives, learning activities and assessment methods. During the process, the design is filled in further and further. You can see the result in step 9 in the course design form. This way you can look back and forward and bring all elements in line with each other.

Mouse over the steps to get more information.



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## STEP 2 Preliminary course information

To start, enter in the basic information about your course if known. This information can be adjusted or clarified as you move through the tool.

Course name/title

Name bachelor and year

Name master programme

Course duration

ECTS

Course capacity min-max

Prerequisite knowledge participant

Participation is mandatory for

Participation is optional for

Name course coordinator

Contact information course coordinator

Lecturers involved

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## STEP 3 Educational principles

### Utrecht Educational Model

When developing your education keep the Utrecht Educational Model in mind. The most important part of the model for course development can be shortly summarized as: *“The programme offers personal, activating and, where possible, a small-group flexible learning experience and good supervision.”*



### Faculty strategy

Also, every faculty and graduate school has formulated its own attainment target that the education should reach. Please open the mission and aims of your faculty to use as a reference document during your course development.

### Programme strategy

This is the strategy from your own programme. Find these missions and aims and use these during your course development.

### Example

Here is an example how to integrate these elements in your course for a Graduate School of Life Sciences (GSLs) module (faculty of Medicine, Utrecht):

- Utrecht Educational Model: Flexibility, freedom of choice, small-scale teaching and engaging education
- Faculty of Medicine/UMCU strategy: Patient participation, interprofessional learning
- GSLs strategy: Research intensive education, scalable learning, technology enhanced learning

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## STEP 4 Course aim

Each course must have a course aim; this is a short sentence which describes the overall objective of your course. When you determine your course aim, it is important to ask yourself what the student should know and/or be able to do after completing the course.

**The following questions can help you to specify the aim of your course.**

- What is the 'problem' that your course will try to fix?
- What are the current student needs? With this question you examine the gap between the current level of expertise and the desired level of expertise.
- What are student needs in the future? By answering this question, you identify certain changes that will take place in the future and the skills that your students need to cope with these changes.
- What are the needs of the working field? Your course is teaching students to become professionals in a future work field and by answering this question you may contribute to the improvement of the transfer from university to 'real life.'

### Example

The aim for the course 'Introduction to Methods and Statistics' is:

After this course, students will be able to assess research and independently analyse and interpret data.

Write down your course aim in the box below:

Course aim

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## STEP 5 Course learning outcomes

Course learning outcomes are detailed descriptions of knowledge, skills and attitudes that students will learn in your course.

To start: find out more about learning outcomes in the video on the right.

Click on the icons to follow the steps.



### Course aim

This step-by-step guide to course design aims to support you in the design process. To learn the process steps you can start here by formulating 2 learning outcomes. In step 7 and 8 you will work with the corresponding assessment and feedback methods and learning activities.

If you want to elaborate more learning outcomes you can do this on the third and fourth page of step 9.

Write down your first 2 learning outcomes in the table below.

### Learning outcomes

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## STEP 6 Technology enhanced learning

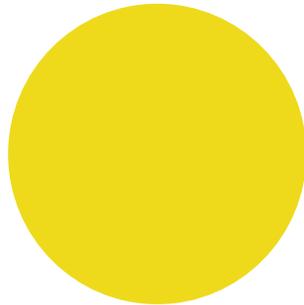
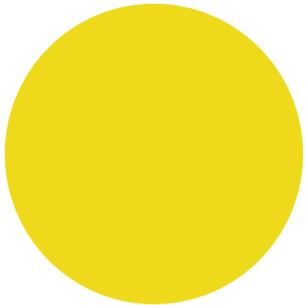
Integrating online elements into your course design can help you teach in a more efficient or effective way. You can think about which parts of your course would be best delivered in a face-to-face session and which parts could best be delivered online.

Think beforehand about the use of technology in your course. After you have selected the assessment and feedback methods in step 7, you will formulate learning activities in step 8, indicating whether these will take place online or face-to-face.

Click on the icons to get more information.

**Blended course design**

**Fully online course design**



Learn more about online and blended education by taking these free online courses:

- [Online education: context and design](#)
- [Re-design your education with blended learning](#)

Click on the course titles to self-enrol.

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# STEP 7 Assessment and feedback

## Assessment and feedback

Assessment and feedback are important aspects of your course design. While completing the learning activities, it will be necessary to monitor progression towards the learning outcomes. This will inform you and the student about their individual progression and will help to guide and steer the learning process.

## Examples

Examples of assessment are a knowledge test with closed and/or open questions, paper, essay, presentation, vlog, poster etc. These should always be accompanied by feedback (from teacher, peers or other relevant stakeholders).

Write down your assessment and/or feedback methods in the table below and align them with your learning outcomes. Indicate in the checkboxes if the methods are formative or summative.

## Formative and summative assessment

Assessment can have a formative and/or a summative aim.

With **summative** assessment you decide if the student has sufficiently reached the learning objective, and you (usually) rate this with a grade which indicates if a student passed or failed. The assessment has a consequence. **Formative** assessment has the aim to form and stimulate the learning process of the student by providing feedback. Formative assessment gives the student insight in their own progress and can prepare them for the end task. There are different ways to assess formatively; e.g. practice knowledge tests, intermediate assignments or feedback on presentations or other skills.

For some inspiration on different assessment methods you can access [this list](#) to review 100+ ways to assess.

### Course aim

### Learning outcome 1

### Assessment/feedback methods

Formative

Summative

### Learning outcome 2

### Assessment/feedback methods

Formative

Summative

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## STEP 8a Learning activities – alignment

Learning activities are the concrete strategies that are designed and implemented into your course. Examples are presentations, watching knowledge clips, discussion groups, project assignments, peer feedback, groupwork, quizzes etc. In this step you will find inspiring examples of learning activities that you can choose in your own course. Keep in mind to use learning activities that match your learning objective, that are engaging, activating and inspiring. For inspiration for different kind of learning activities you can look at the [teaching and learning collection](#). For learning activities specifically for the Lifelong Learning platform [this overview](#) might be useful.

Click and hold "Example" for an example of a learning outcome with assessment & feedback methods and learning activities.

Write down your learning activities and indicate in the check boxes if these activities will take place online or face-to-face.

Course aim

Learning outcome 1

Assessment/feedback methods

Formative Summative

Learning activities

Online Face-to-face

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**Learning outcome 2**

**Assessment / feedback methods**

**Formative Summative**

**Learning activities**

**Online Face-to-face**

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# STEP 8b Learning activities – final check

Take the educational principles of the UU, your faculty and your programme which you collected in step 3 and put your design through the test. Keep in mind that not every learning outcome/assessment method/learning activity will fit all principles.

Does your design fit the principles?

Course aim

Learning outcome 1

Final check

Assessment/feedback methods

Formative Summative Final check

Learning activities

Online Face-to-face Final check

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# STEP 9 Course design form

## Course information

Course name/title

Name bachelor and year

Name master programme

Course duration

ECTS

Course capacity min-max

Prerequisite knowledge participant

Participation is mandatory for

Participation is optional for

Name course coordinator

Contact information course coordinator

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## Learning outcome 1

Assessment/feedback methods

Formative Summative

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Online Face-to-face

Learning outcome 2

Assessment/feedback methods

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# Continue designing

You have now developed your course design for two learning outcomes. If you want to elaborate on more learning outcomes, you can complete the tables below.

## Learning outcome

### Assessment/feedback methods

Formative Summative

### Learning activities

Online Face-to-face

## Learning outcome

### Assessment/feedback methods

Formative Summative

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**Online** **Face-to-face**

**Learning outcome**

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**Formative** **Summative**

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## Colophon:

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