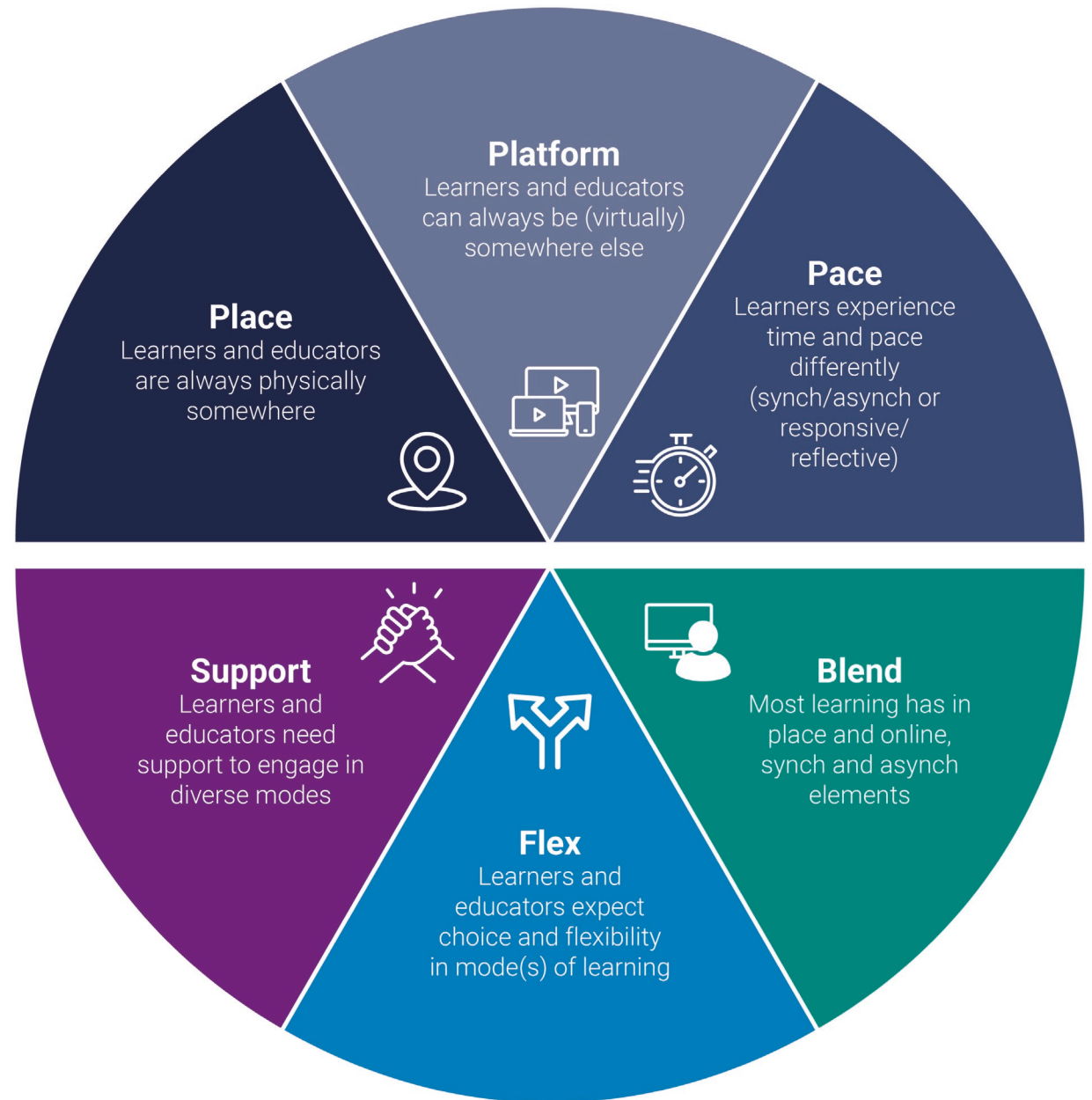


‘Beyond blended’ pillars: curriculum lenses

These lenses have been developed to support curriculum design for diverse and flexible modes of learning (that we call ‘beyond blended’). The lenses can be used in conjunction with the other curriculum resources produced by the Jisc curriculum and learning design project that are available from the [Beyond blended: rethinking curriculum and learning design](#) web guide.

Six pillars for designing 'beyond blended'



About the lenses

Each lens responds to our six 'pillars' with a set of prompts or questions for design teams. The prompts can be added to or edited to suit course issues and organisational approaches to design. A blank template is included to allow curriculum teams, departments or organisations to develop their own questions, meeting the requirements of their own curriculum principles and the needs of their own students.

The curriculum lenses are:

Curriculum design →

Learner engagement →

Assessment and feedback →

Learning in large cohorts →

Digital capabilities in the curriculum →

Employability and working futures →

Create your own lens →

Curriculum design



Place



- How does the curriculum make positive use of place, for example:
 - Valuing student presence (eg discussion, debate, co-construction, design sprints, problem specification, peer feedback and support, building community)?
 - Valuing the presence of teachers and other experts (eg dynamic, responsive teaching, Q and A, feedback, encouragement and care, modelling and sharing practice)?
 - Using the material environment as a resource (eg field work, site visits, scenarios, real world practices)?
 - Using material resources (eg configuring furniture to shape interactions; using facilities in specialist labs and studios, production facilities, materials for making and doing)?
- How do we communicate to students the value and purpose of in place learning?
- How can we add value to our in place teaching (eg with recordings, digital activities in place)?
- Where are our learners across a typical week? How does this suit their needs (eg in relation to travel, work)?
- Can learning spaces be reconfigured, or can we book different spaces to suit different session requirements?
- Where are our students when they are learning outside of timetabled sessions?
- Do these places provide additional resources eg social, cultural?
- Do some students need extra support because of their location(s)?



Platform

Curriculum design



- How does the curriculum make positive use of online platforms, for example: collaborative writing and design, threaded discussions, diverse media, different ways of interacting?
- How do we communicate to learners the value and purpose of online and virtual learning?
- What general platforms are available to our students and what specialist platforms, apps and online communities do we ask them to access? How do our students navigate the online curriculum (eg calendar, virtual learning environment, student app)? What makes our students want to engage online? What platforms and features do they prefer for learning and how can we support these preferences?
- What makes it difficult for our students to participate fully online, and how are we helping? How do we communicate and shape the norms of online interaction?
- Which platforms and media support learning experiences that are not readily available in person? How can we provide innovative, creative or challenging experiences for our students online?
- Are there risks to learning from some online platforms, especially third party, and how do we discuss these?



Pace



- How does the curriculum deploy different kinds of time and pace (synchronous/asynchronous) for learning?
- How do we ensure that live, responsive sessions are used to maximum value?
- How do we ensure that independent, reflective sessions are introduced gradually to support learners' growing self-direction?
- How are these different session types timetabled through the course and the course week? Is there flexibility for teaching staff to vary sessions? What choices do learners have?
- How do we help learners to understand the different demands of live and independent study, and to prepare for them? What support do learners have to engage in different modes (eg provisions for neurodiversity)?



- How are the resources of time, attention and presence distributed in sessions (sync/async) and in space (place/platform)? Does this distribution reflect the learning experience we want for our students?
- How does the course schedule support our students in managing their time on and off campus?
- How do places and platforms support different activities effectively, including assessed activities?
- How are different modes of learning communicated to our students, including the benefits and demands of each?
- What activities help our students to integrate synchronous and asynchronous learning, for example flipped classroom approach, starting activities in class to continue in own time, structured note-making, etc?
- How can our students use online resources productively and attentively in live classes?
- How do we support students to interact across modes, in hybrid sessions (eg with mixed-group tasks)?



Flex

Curriculum design



- What choices do our teaching team have over modes of teaching, learning and assessment in the curriculum?
- What flexibility is possible and valuable eg to respond to our students' needs individually and together? What choices do our students have through the curriculum (time, place, pace) and how do we explain these? What choices do our students have or could they have in specific sessions or activities? How do we enable students to interact productively in mixed-mode (hybrid) sessions?
- How do different students prefer to learn, balancing reflective and responsive, self-paced, guided and collaborative modes? How are student differences used as a curriculum resource and a planning guide? How are our teaching staff and students involved in forward planning for learning places and platforms?



Support

Curriculum design



- How does staff CPD/academic development support our teaching in different modes?
- How are new learning platforms and places introduced to our students? How do we help them to engage in diverse modes?
- How do our students learn to manage attention and focus in complex and diverse environments, and to integrate their learning across modes?
- What support is available for our students' digital study skills? What are we modelling for them in our teaching?

Assessment and feedback



Place

Assessment and feedback



- What assignments require our students to be present (eg performance, viva, practical, live exam, in situ competence test)?
- Do our students have access to all the digital technologies they need to complete assignments and assessments?
- When and how do our students receive in-person feedback (eg from tutors, peers, other experts)?
When and how do our students receive feedback from the setting or environment (eg on work placements, site visits, fieldwork, practicals)?
- How can presence in place be used to support peer feedback and assessed groupwork?
- How can our use of physical space support our students' wellbeing, enhance concentration and reduce anxiety during assessments?



Platform

Assessment and feedback



- What digital artefacts do our students produce for assignments and assessments?
- What digital tools do we encourage or make available to support assignments and assessments? Are there any we discourage or limit in use, and why? How is this discussed with students?
- When and how do our students receive feedback from the digital learning environment (eg interactive resources and environments, simulations and games, virtual worlds, quizzes)?
- How are we using online assessments creatively to support a diversity of learners and learning, and ensure assessment is authentic to the environments our students are likely to be working in?
- How can online environments provide novel forms of assessment?
- How do we ensure equitable access to digital resources that can support student success?



Pace

Assessment and feedback



- How do we use differently paced assessments to support different learners (eg live assessments, time-limited assessments, open-ended assessments, iterative assessments, portfolio assessments)? What are the opportunities to assess iteratively, or to assess process rather than outcome?
- What are the opportunities for students to get rapid feedback (eg within the assessment itself)?
- What are the opportunities for students to get reflective feedback when they have time to attend and respond (eg audio feedback, annotations)?



Blend

Assessment and feedback



- How are assessments distributed through course time to ensure a manageable assessment load for students, and workload for educators?
- How does the balance of in-person and online assessment reflect the outcomes our students are expected to achieve, and the learning experience we want them to have overall?
- What different kinds of feedback do students receive (eg in person and as comments)?
- When do educators and students have opportunities to discuss assessment standards? How are expected standards clearly communicated with students?
- What blend of assignment tasks can allow all students to showcase their capabilities (assessment for all)? How are students supported to reflect and respond to feedback on individual assessments and on their progress over time?



Flex

Assessment and feedback



- How are the specific purposes of different assessments communicated and discussed with students?
- What choices do our students have in assessment (eg choice of media, mode, platforms used)?
- How can our students be assessed 'in place' other than through proctored exams (eg through vivas, presentations, question and answer sessions, peer review)?
- How can our students be assessed online other than through proctored exams (eg through digital projects and productions, storytelling, blogging/podcasting, participation in online scenarios)?
- How are teaching teams made aware of the varieties of assessment that are possible? How are any new guidelines and regulations (eg academic integrity) discussed with educators?



Support

Assessment and feedback



- What support do our teaching team have to design and run authentic, challenging and inclusive assessments, for delivery in place and online?
- Can our students practice all the forms of assessment that will contribute to their grade? Can they practice in the relevant environments?
- How do we support our students to receive, record and make good use of feedback in different formats?
- How are we sharing good practice in assessment design?
- How do workload models acknowledge the demands of different assessment types, including set-up, support and marking?
- How are we involving educators and students in the development of guidance and assessment regimes (eg in relation to new AI capabilities)?

Digital capabilities in the curriculum



Place

Digital capabilities in the curriculum



- What digital capabilities do our students develop in specific places eg because they have access to specific devices, instrumentation, systems, augmented realities and other digitally rich environments?
- How do we support the development of digital capabilities live in class, where this is beneficial?
- How do our teaching staff develop their in place, in person classroom practices, including their use of flexible and digitally augmented spaces?
- How do we support our students to engage fully in classroom interactions and gain maximum value from in-person time and place?



Platform

Digital capabilities in the curriculum



- What digital capabilities do our students develop in the online environments we ask them to use?
- How are students developing their awareness and critical capability for new platforms such as immersive spaces and generative AI?
- How do our students learn to engage in online interactions and gain maximum value from participation, in and beyond the classroom environment?
- How are we supporting our students' digital study skills and habits, for example in what we model to them and how we design and scaffold assignments?
- How do we introduce and negotiate the norms of academic/professional behaviour in online spaces?



Pace

Digital capabilities in the curriculum



- What capabilities for time and task management are students developing by navigating the curriculum?
- How are students using digital tools to support time management and what opportunities do they have to extend their repertoire eg using project management tools?
- How do we support students with independent study skills?
- How do we support students to participate fully in live sessions, whether online or in place?



Blend

Digital capabilities in the curriculum



- What skills do our students need to integrate their learning across diverse modes (eg using a portfolio, managing notes and references, time management, study apps)? How do we talk about these?
- How do we scaffold our students' attention in online and in-person learning environments? How do we enable them to take progressively more responsibility for how they engage and attend?



Flex

Digital capabilities in the curriculum



- How do our learners understand their own learning needs and preferences in this diverse landscape?
- How can we help them to support each other with digital practices?
- How do we help learners become more practised at managing mixed modes, both live (interacting in hybrid sessions) and asynchronously (using virtual resources productively in place)?
- How do we encourage our students to think critically about the digital technologies they are offered for learning? What critical skills do they need to make good choices for themselves?



Support

Digital capabilities in the curriculum



- What support do our students have to progress their digital capabilities, especially for learning in different modes?
- How do we support our teaching team to move confidently between in place and online settings and to plan teaching, learning and assessment around their different strengths?
- What support do our curriculum and teaching team have with digital pedagogies and learning design?
- What additional resources need to be in place for our teaching team to manage the demands of different modes?

Learner engagement



Place

Learner engagement



- What aspects of the curriculum are more engaging in place (eg on site, with peers, with clients, in communities) and how is the value of these sessions explained to learners?
- How can learners have input to the design of curriculum learning spaces and facilities? What features do learners find engaging and motivating?



Platform

Learner engagement



- What aspects of the curriculum are more engaging online, or can take place online without a significant drop in learner engagement?
- How can learners have input to the design of online platforms and environments? What features do learners find engaging and motivating?



Pace

Learner engagement



- How do we help learners to engage actively in live sessions, online and in place (eg polling, micro-tasks, buzz groups)?
- How do we help them to engage during independent study (eg staged and scaffolded tasks, peer support and review)?



Blend

Learner engagement



- How does the curriculum blend of in-person and online learning support student engagement, for example allowing them to rationalise travel and fit learning around other responsibilities?
- What highly engaging experiences are offered to students (eg placements, projects, scenarios and simulations) and how are they distributed through the curriculum?



Flex

Learner engagement



- Where in the curriculum is there flexibility for students to participate according to their own preferences?
- Where is it important for engagement that students come together at a fixed time and/or place (ie do not have choice) and how is this communicated and negotiated?
- How are we understanding and working with student differences to maximise engagement from everyone?



Support

Learner engagement



- What opportunities are there to discuss engagement with students and to understand their perspectives? How do room allocation and timetabling support our strategy for student engagement?
- How can we make changes, if changes are needed?
- How can we share ideas for student engagement with colleagues in other curriculum teams?

Learning in large cohorts



Place

Learning in large cohorts



- What spaces on campus can accommodate large cohorts in place? When does this provide a positive learning experience?
- How can technologies in place (mics, screens, polling, participation apps) support engagement with large cohorts?
- What spaces allow large cohorts to be taught simultaneously in different locations and/or online? How are these differences managed so students can benefit equally?
- How are students allocated to, and what do they do in, smaller sub-cohorts and groups? How do they develop a sense of belonging and commitment while having the chance to work with diverse others?



Platform

Learning in large cohorts



- What functions of live learning platforms and what additional third-party functions make learning engaging at scale?
- How are large cohorts best facilitated in live and asynchronous platforms (eg with breakout groups, turn-taking debates)? How are expectations negotiated/communicated?
- How can student access to learning data eg progress dashboards, help to develop a sense of belonging to a cohort and ongoing engagement?
- What assumptions about cohort size and platform use are built into curriculum design? Into procurement and licensing? What emerging technologies are being explored with large cohorts?



Pace

Learning in large cohorts



- How can diverse learning preferences and practices be accommodated, for example in allocating students to sub-cohorts and groups? How can diversity become a resource within the large cohort?
- How can digital platforms be used by students to navigate the curriculum, for example between live and independent study, between solo, small group and cohort activities?
- How can we understand the diverse experiences of large cohorts, for example by eliciting feedback from diverse student representatives, and encouraging student involvement in curriculum design?



Blend

Learning in large cohorts



- How does the curriculum provide students with opportunities to engage in different groups and interactions, and to work collaboratively with different other students?
- What highly engaging experiences are offered to students (eg placements, projects, scenarios and simulations)? How are they distributed through the curriculum, and their impact maximised?
- What are the resourcing implications of different modes and blends for students and teaching teams?



Flex

Learning in large cohorts



- What kinds of flexibility are really important to students (eg time, place, medium, topic, assignment)? Where in the curriculum is it important that the cohort is learning and progressing together? Where in the curriculum is flexibility beneficial and manageable?
- How can students' digital access be used to provide meaningful choices eg over medium of learning, how they collaborate, what is produced for assignments, without significant impact on teaching resources?



Support

Learning in large cohorts



- What resources for curriculum design also need to be scaled up when dealing with large cohorts (eg time in design and preparation)?
- How can digital technology be used to support a large teaching team, for example with collaboration spaces, shared access to student information?
- How do room allocation and timetabling support large cohorts? What assumptions about cohort size and campus space are built into curriculum design, and are they sustainable?
- How can we share ideas for student engagement with colleagues in other curriculum teams?

Employability and working futures



Place

Employability and working futures



- What aspects of this subject or profession continue to require in-person interactions (on site, with clients, in communities)?
- How does the curriculum reflect the kind of physical spaces our graduates are likely to be working in? What innovative spaces for learning do we offer?
- What skills do our students need for these environments, and how are these skills practised, supported and assessed?



Platform

Employability and working futures



- What aspects of this subject or profession take place in online spaces or virtual or modelled environments, or are likely to do so?
- How does the curriculum reflect the kind of online environments our graduates are likely to be working in? What innovative online spaces do we offer?
- What skills do our students need for these environments, and how are these skills practised, supported and assessed?



Pace

Employability and working futures



- How does our curriculum help students progressively to gain skills in time and task management?
- How do we help them to participate confidently in live, responsive sessions? How do we help them to make good use of independent, reflective time?
- What opportunities do students have to manage extended periods of working time eg solo projects?
What opportunities do they have to manage time and task collaboratively eg group projects?



Blend

Employability and working futures



- How does our curriculum blend of in-person and online learning reflect the complex living and working environments in the future?
- How might we offer our students experiences of emerging environments such as hybrid work places, augmented reality and 'smart' (data-enhanced) spaces for learning? (Sometimes this might involve partnerships with other departments or workplaces to access specialist platforms/places and hybrids.)



Flex

Employability and working futures



- How do we encourage our students to think critically about the digital technologies they are offered for learning? What critical skills and values do they need to make good choices in the future?
- What learning and working environments do our students expect or imagine? How do we help them make choices or changes to support different possible futures?



Support

Employability and working futures



- How do our students identify their own needs for support and development? How do we signpost them to opportunities while they are at university?
- What opportunities are there to discuss employability and digital futures, in the curriculum itself?
- How can we future-proof our thinking about the use of space and place? What role can workplaces, employers and alumni play in this thinking?

Create your own lens



Place





Platform





Pace





Blend





Flex





Support

