



Project Document Cover Sheet

Project Information			
Project Acronym	UG-FLEX		
Project Title	UG-Flex		
Start Date	September 2008	End Date	July 2012
Lead Institution	University of Greenwich		
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Partner Institutions	Not applicable		
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Programme Name (and number)	<i>05/08: Institutional approaches to curriculum design</i>		
Programme Manager	Sarah Knight		
Document Name			
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Author(s) & project role	Claire Eustance – Project Manager, Paul Butler – Technical Lead, Duncan Reeder, Business Analyst and core project team members Dave Mutti & Clifton Kandler.		
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1	08 December 2010	Following PM's accident, extension of submission deadline to 8.12.10 agreed with Sarah Knight.	

Interim Reporting Template

Project Name	UG-Flex, University of Greenwich
Report compiled by	Claire Eustance, UG-Flex Project Manager
With contributions from	Duncan Reeder (Business Analyst); Paul Butler (Technical Lead); Dave Mutti & Clifton Kandler (core team members)
Reporting period	01 May – 31 October 2010

Section One: Summary

In the period from May – October 2010 the UG-Flex project has:

- Agreed a revised scope statement that has facilitated a more defined and targeted programme of activities;
- Launched an enhanced Authorised List of Programmes on the University's student record system containing details of all programmes approval and review status;
- Conducted detailed requirements gathering and analysis in relation to improving the experience of student studying on 'non-standard' programmes;
- Shared project findings/outcomes and good practice and maintained the profile of the project and the wider programme at conferences, meetings and events at the University of Greenwich and across the wider sector;
- Begun to consider the implications of the Browne Review recommendations and CSR and taken steps to address the risk and opportunities arising from these and other factors

The submission of this interim report has been delayed due to the absence of the Project Manager from work following an accident. Consequently postings to the project blog and general communications have reduced, contributions to the Design Studio delayed and some meetings/presentations cancelled or rearranged. The Project Manger is now back at work and no significant detrimental impact on the project is apparent or envisaged.

Section Two: Activities and Progress

For the period May – October 2010 the UG-Flex Project can report the following activities in support of our objective to reveal and enhance curriculum development processes in order to support a more agile and diverse curriculum:

- A project prioritisation exercise was completed that clarified and narrowed the project's scope and remit. Members of the core project team conducted a detailed review of the issues identified by stakeholders in order to identify the most significant areas for improvement, taking into account availability of additional resources, complementary initiatives along with evidence of sustained appetite for change.

The outcome of this exercise is a new project scope statement defining three related areas of project activity as follows:

- Scrutinise and enhance systems and processes to manage and communicate information on flexible programmes and courses;
- Inform, develop and share practice on curriculum design tools and techniques;
- Seek to influence discussion and serve as a catalyst for an agreed policy on flexibility in the curriculum and how it will be delivered and resourced.

The revised scope statement was presented to and endorsed by the UG-Flex Project Steering Group in October 2010.

<http://www.slideshare.net/UGFlex/ug-flex-new-scope-document-2010-11>

- In support of the UG-Flex project objectives 2, 4 and 5 (as stated in the project plan), on 16 September 2010 the project launched an enhanced Authorised List of Programmes containing additional functionality to capture, scrutinise and report on data on programme validation and review.

In the period April – October 2010 project resources were focussed on testing and preparing for the roll out of this first project output. User acceptance testing took place in late June 2010 and resulted in further amendments; a training needs survey was conducted with staff in July and training materials and a series of joint and 1-2-1 training/feedback meetings followed in August and early September.

Initial reaction from key stakeholders to the new functionality has been extremely positive. An issues log has been set up to record comments, feedback and suggestions and this will be reviewed in mid-2011. Our project evaluators will conduct a series of interviews later in 2011 to capture the impact of these enhancements on stakeholders' practice, perceptions and experiences.

- In support of project objectives 1, 2 & 3, in this reporting period project resources have been allocated to capturing stakeholder requirements in relation to improving the management and communication of information on curricula that sits outside of the University's

'standard' Sept-June, Mon-Fri, 9am-9pm pattern of delivery. Two stakeholder workshops were organised in June 2010 for school representatives and representatives from support offices to consider the causes and possible solutions to the poor experience of student on 'non-standard' programmes of study.

The outcome was a series of recommendations that fell broadly into two categories –specific systems-based solutions and solutions that require a wider review of Greenwich's current academic calendar in the context of enabling more flexible curriculum design.

Mindful of the potential impact of external drivers (Browne Review and Comprehensive Spending Review in particular), members of the Project Management Group and Project Steering Group agreed that that project resources should be used to assess and analyse specific system-based solutions as well as communicating the opportunities and implications of significant structural change to the academic calendar. In consequence, extensive analysis and modelling is ongoing alongside communication/dissemination activities, (for example presentations to the University's Executive Group and other strategic committees).

- The project team has maintained an oversight of progress made towards delivering the additional recommendations that arose out of the project's review of validation & review processes and can report that a pilot of a document management and workflow solution (using SharePoint) is due to commence at Greenwich in 2011. This development is considered an additional output of the UG-Flex project.
- In line with the project's revised scope and in furtherance of the project's stated goal to create opportunities to 'share good practice and facilitate greater knowledge exchange among stakeholders', the project manager has collaborated with and organised events for colleagues in other University schools and departments (notably the School of Education, School of Humanities & Social Sciences, Educational Development, Learning & Quality and Library Services) in order to raise awareness of the outcomes emerging from the broader curriculum design programme and to share practice from other institutions, notably Ulster's Viewpoints and BCU's T-SPARC projects.
- As part of the scope prioritisation exercise conducted earlier in 2010, the project's work packages have been revised (copy enclosed with this report).

A review of project progress in terms of work packages reveals the following:

- Project management infrastructure continues to be effective; project meetings are scheduled annually in advance, are well attended and are deemed by our evaluators to function effectively in scrutinising, challenging and guiding the work of the project team.
- Communication and dissemination activities continue and in this reporting period the project has contributed to the SEDA Spring Conference, ALT-C 2010,

<http://www.slideshare.net/UGFlex/alt-c-2010-poster-0048-dcb09v2>, a University of Greenwich conference on flexibility, the October Programme Meeting and the Learning & Teaching Experts Group (October 2010).

- Practice sharing activities have progressed in this reporting period, with information exchanged with Middlesex and Leeds Universities and MMU. Approaches to Teesside and Derby universities were not taken up. The project has submitted a proposal to present at the SunGard European User Group in Durham early in 2011.
- Internally at Greenwich, stakeholder engagement is embedded in the composition and philosophy of the project. This has resulted in wide cross-section representation at project events and meetings and consistent involvement from some members of staff. However, awareness of the project across the wider staff body remains relatively low, and concentrated in specific groups/pockets of people.
- In terms of sharing good practice with colleagues at Greenwich, in this reporting period the project team has placed more emphasis on targeted activities designed to add value to complementary university initiatives (notably 'graduate attributes' and supported curriculum review and the new arrivals [formerly 'induction'] group).
- Evaluation activities are ongoing, and in this reporting period have including: meeting with project staff, observation of a project meeting; a survey of 3 schools on the impact of stakeholder engagement and the presentation of a report to the project management group.
- Process analysis and mapping is ongoing and is recognised as an extremely useful tool both to the project and potentially for wider change initiatives.
- Systems and procedures modelling have become more defined as a result of the 2010 project prioritisation exercise; the project manager has identified a risk that resources to complete this work package may not be sufficient and is taking steps to address this issue.
- Emphasis on piloting of systems-based solutions has moved away from developing discrete 'real time' pilots to the creation of a test environment in the student records systems where scenarios relating to flexible start/finish dates can be modelled.
- There is now a stronger focus on training in order to deliver appropriate and effective support for enhancements introduced by the project. Members of the project team have worked closely with the University's Student Records Support Services Manager to ensure the most appropriate training and resources are developed.

Section Three: Risks, Issues, Opportunities

Analysis of UG-Flex's risk profile is conducted regularly by the Project Manager and annually by the Project Management Group and Steering Group.

The following risks are considered to be live issues:

Dramatic Change in external drivers: The project (not to mention the University of Greenwich and the wider education sector) is still deliberating on the implications of the Browne review recommendations and the new Government's comprehensive spending review. The Management Group has discussed these issues and recognise both opportunities the project might capitalise on in terms of offering enhanced systems to support more flexible curriculum models, as well as threats in terms of stakeholder buy-in if the project is wrongly associated with ideological values that underpin the CSR. To this end members of the management group are tasked with drawing the attention of their colleagues /teams to the project and seeking synergy with related initiatives. The project manager is tasked with following up opportunities for collaboration.

Organisational change which may affect impact of project outcomes: The University Court has established a Committee to appoint a new Vice Chancellor of Greenwich University to replace Tessa Blackstone who is retiring. It is anticipated that the new VC will be in post from the beginning of the 2011/12 academic session. Additionally, two other senior post holders (both serving on the project Steering Group) are retiring in 2011. Consequently there is a risk that decisions on wider recommendations arising from the project may be delayed until the appointment of a new VC / senior manager later in 2011. The UG-Flex Project Manager has held meeting with 2 of the 3 Deputy VCs in an attempt to build support for the recommendations emerging from the project specifically relating to the review of the current academic calendar. Further meetings with senior University staff are planned.

Additional costs (lack of resource – i.e. loss of project staff): There is a risk that the systems modelling required to fully achieve the project's objectives will not be completed by end of March 2011, when the project resource allocated to this work is exhausted. A review of the project budget and discussions with the head of CIS are in hand to identify additional resource to meet programming/system development requirements. There is also a further risk that project staff may secure new jobs and resign their posts before the end of their contract – discussions are in hand with senior managers in ILS/CIS to address this.

Over the course of this reporting period as the project team has explored a range of solutions to flexible registration, assessment and progression it has again become apparent that the project has exposed deeper root and branch issues that go beyond UG-Flex's immediate remit to touch on areas where there are multiple complex dependencies. It is recognised by members of the core project team that this knowledge may be used to deliver huge benefit to the university and therefore options are being considered to mainstream the detailed process analysis activities developed as part of the UG-Flex project in the institution, possibly through the creation of a process improvement team. If this is pursued, this will be a further output of the project.

Section Four: Outputs and Deliverables

The following outputs are expected to arise from the UG-Flex Project:

Type of output	Details	Proposed audience: who will use this output and why?
Final Project Report (& Executive Summary)	Describing approaches taken, key challenges, recommendations, lessons learned, outputs and outcomes, progress towards achievement of aims and objectives, recommendations etc.	External and internal audience will use this output to get information on what the project did and did not achieve, and how. The Executive Summary will summarise key information from the report and will be targeted at audiences who may like to have more information before they commit to reading the full report.
Case Studies	A maximum of five case studies to describe challenges of curriculum design at University of Greenwich as identified by different stakeholders and the steps taken to address these.	Mainly external audiences in order to become more informed on ways to address challenges in curriculum design from a systems and business process perspective. Internal audience too may use this output, mainly for publicity and possibly training purposes.
Curriculum Guide	A web based guide to curriculum design at the University of Greenwich which provides a step by step guide on the range of curriculum design and delivery options possible.	Mainly internal audience, with the language and approach aimed at University of Greenwich staff to ensure knowledge is widely available and used. External audiences will have access to the Guide which they may use as an example of practice and adapt accordingly.
Process Maps and Functional & Technical specifications.	A process map of the University's Validation & Review process is available on the design studio and on Circle. Functional and Technical Specification documents on management of data on programme approval and review are available on request wef October 2010.	Internal audiences will be informed of the potential for wider university-driven enhancements that may have been identified through the modelling process. External audiences will have access to these models to inform their work and as a comparison/example.
Academic Models	New 'flexible' academic calendar/framework	Internal audiences and external audiences for same reasons given above.

Institutional Approaches to Curriculum Design Programme

Video / Audio Clips to exemplify practice of engaging stakeholders in curriculum design review	A selection of no more than 6 videos and audio clips showing practice of engaging stakeholders (academic, support staff, students and other) in curriculum design review.	Both internal and external audiences to share examples of practice and/or issues.
Project Materials	Three rich pictures outlining stakeholder's perceptions of curriculum design & delivery at the University of Greenwich are available on Circle and the design studio.	Both internal and external audiences to share examples of practice and/or issues.

Expected Technical Outputs

The University of Greenwich uses a proprietary student records and associated systems ("Banner") from SunGard Higher Education and where necessary adds or alters functions and processes in response to identified need. The UG-Flex Project reiterates its willing to share the technical documentation associated with the 'flexibility' enhancements it is delivering at Greenwich in order to inform potential related enhancement and development in other institutions.

On 16.9.10 the UG-Flex project launched an enhanced Authorised List of Programmes in Banner that included additional functionality to capture, scrutinise and report on data on programme validation and review and in order to achieve an authoritative source of information ('truth') to replace (or at least strengthen) disparate, school-based unsynchronised 'shadow IT systems'. The changes underpinning this new functionality consist of:

- New code written to create forms to cater for additional data requirements and associated new database objects in the Banner database to store and facilitate manipulation of data for tracking a programme as it moves through its validation & review cycle;
- Creating and running a script to update data on existing programmes;
- Code written to change the user view of the Authorised List of Programmes (known as "Banner Web") to make the new data available to users and creating 4 new reports.

The UG-Flex project is currently analysing options for building further additional functionality in Banner to accommodate a wider range of registration, assessment and progression points available to students across the academic year. The expected technical output will be systems development to embed the concept of *start month* as a crucial data item in Banner.

As noted in the previous interim report, the UG-Flex project is committed to sharing what they have learned on delivering greater curriculum flexibility through product-based applications like Banner and to this end have submitted a proposal to run a session at the forthcoming SunGard European User Group conference taking place in Durham in early 2011.

Engagement with Design Studio

To date the UG-Flex page in the design studio contains a small number of assets, and more will follow in the coming few months.

The UG-Flex project is fully supportive of the philosophy of the Design Studio to provide a record of resources at programme level, although progress towards posting assets from the project has been slow, partly as a result of absence of the project manager in November 2010.

Outputs produced in this reporting period

- Test logs relating to the programme approval & review systems enhancements (June-August 2010)
- Summary reports of two stakeholder requirements gathering workshops (June 2010)
- Enhanced Authorised List of Programmes in Banner; providing source of truth of records on validation and review of programmes; all staff may now run reports on forthcoming review schedules by year, in turn assisting planning schedules for review and monitoring for QA purposes. (September 2010)
- New UG-Flex Project Scope Statement (endorsed October 2010)
- Document containing review of Academic Calendars in use at UK universities (September 2010)
- Presentation "Improving the experience of students on 'flexible' programmes – the problem and possible solutions" (University of Greenwich case study) (October 2010)
- Stakeholder Engagement Survey – Project Evaluators Report (October 2010)

Section Five: Evaluation

The following evaluation activities have taken place in this reporting period:

1. Review of project documentation and subsequent report by project evaluators on scope and focus of UG-Flex project (May 2010);
2. Online questionnaire on impact of stakeholder engagement devised and circulated to all staff in three schools (Humanities, Science and Architecture & Construction) (July-August 2010);
3. Report by project evaluators on scope and impact of UG-Flex project's engagement with stakeholders (October 2010);
4. Regular communications (face-to-face meetings and email correspondence) between project evaluators and Project Manager;
5. Attendance of project evaluator at July 2010 Project Management Meeting as an observer;
6. Attendance of project evaluators at October 2010 Project Management Meeting to present report on stakeholder engagement.

The UG-Flex project is committed to ensuring that evaluation activities are an ongoing and integral part of the project throughout its lifetime, and to this effect the project evaluators have been given

the opportunity to observe/participate in project activities. Following her attendance at the July 2010 Project Management Group Meeting the evaluator observed that the Group appears to function effectively in scrutinising, challenging and guiding the work of the project team. Further, the evaluators are sent copies of papers of meetings of the Project Management Group and Project Steering Group and are invited to relevant and appropriate events.

The Project Manager and evaluators have discussed ways to ensure best value is achieved from evaluation activities, and to this end online surveys have been used (as any 'any time' process they are relatively low cost, the majority of evaluators time being spent after the initial survey circulated in analysing responses). On the downside, survey response rates have been relatively low and findings have served more to confirm existing practice rather than suggest new approaches. However, the survey process has been useful as a way to compile a list of names of staff willing to be interviewed in more depth later in 2011 in order to capture qualitative and interpretive information.

The level of communication between the Project Manager and the project evaluators ensures dialogue is regular and views and feedback on the evaluation process can be quickly shared. For example, after the presentation at the Management Group in November, the project manager was prompted to report the evaluators the preference among the management group for the evaluation to concentrate on a more phenomenological approach (interviews/discussions) in order to capture the more subtle impact the project is having at Greenwich in relation to cultural change/institutional change.

Forthcoming evaluation activities:

A further online questionnaire of staff working across the University's support offices is in hand and a series of 1-2-1 interviews are scheduled for 2011.

To keep evaluation costs within budget, another option being considered in order to capture more detailed qualitative and interpretive evaluation data is to use a VOXUR (portable video unit) to capture stakeholder views on the project's impact. The UG-Flex project is grateful to BCU's T-SPARC project team for their willingness to loan one of their VOXUR units and provide training for this purpose.

The Project Manager is planning to conduct an evaluation of the UG-Flex Project blog.

Section Six: Outcomes and Lessons Learned

The project would like to share the following outcomes and lessons learned over the course of this reporting period:

The UG-Flex project has previously documented (as has the wider programme synthesis team) that achieving aims and objectives in relation to curriculum design is neither simple nor straightforward. UG-Flex project's resources were deliberately concentrated on making enhancements to systems and processes, however the opportunities for dialogue that the project has facilitated (at meetings, consultation/requirements gathering events and 1-2-1s) has added

credence to the view that if the university is serious about enabling flexibility, then a significant shift is required in organisational culture that will touch not only on systems but academic practices and allocation of resources not to mention challenging long held attitudes/practices/mindsets.

We would like to record that the UG-Flex project is making some progress towards delivering some measure of institutional change. For example, there has been a generally extremely positive response to the launch of the enhanced Authorised List of Programmes in September 2010 from stakeholders on the project management group and steering group and from members of the university most directly concerned with QA and QE. We recognise that organised evaluation is required and may alter and add to this generally positive view; however we would like to record that the enhancements delivered by the project have delivered greater trust between some stakeholder and recognition of other perspectives and priorities.

For example, it has been noted that the process of consultation, discussion and also testing and review of systems enhancements (related to validation & review of programmes) has directly contributed to improving communication between staff in the University's Learning & Quality Unit and Student Systems & Data team and that formal meetings now take place between staff from these areas (Ref: LQU/PaCO meeting on protocols for the approval of new programmes of study 5.10.10)

Further evidence was noted at the September meeting of the management group where colleagues from both schools and support offices agreed that it had been too easy to blame "systems" and too simplistic to assume that changes to systems alone would deliver solutions to problems.

The UG-Flex project would also like to share its findings on the value of detailed business analysis activity in identifying key requirements and intricate dependencies as well as wider issues of concern to the institution. Members of the core project team, and more crucially other senior managers who have been engaged by the Project Manager and Project Business Analyst, have recognised the potential benefit to the university of this detailed analysis. Consequently, options are being considered to mainstream the detailed process analysis activities developed as part of the UG-Flex project into the institution, possibly through the creation of a process improvement team. If such options are pursued then this will be a further output and outcome of this project.

A further lesson learned is the value of project teams in the programme sharing good and emerging practice. Specifically the UG-Flex project is taking forward work/activities first developed by Ulster's Viewpoints project and BCU's T-SPARC project.

Section Seven: Communication and Dissemination Activities

- The UG-Flex Project Manager gave a well-received presentation at the SEDA Spring Conference in Leeds in May 2010 with colleagues from Cluster B, entitled: *'THE CAMEL TRAIL: collaborative approaches to managing emerging lessons'*.
- The UG-Flex Project Manager and Business Analyst contributed to two sessions at the October 2010 Programme Meeting on QA/QE (with MMU) and 'Students as Agents of Change' with Cluster B colleagues.
- The UG-Flex Project Manager contributed to a presentation at the October 2010 Learning & Teaching Experts Group with Cluster B colleagues looking at institutions reactions to curriculum change.
- The UG-Flex project blog www.ugflex.blogspot.com has been maintained and is used to provide updates on the project progress, team activities and related issues and initiatives of interests. Total hits as of end of October 2010 stood at almost 400.
- The UG-Flex Project Manager and other members of the project team have continued to make presentations on the project at University meetings, events and other fora.
- Acting on the revised project scope's remit to inform, develop and share practice, the UG-Flex Project Manager has maintained a watching brief on those initiatives / projects operating within the University of Greenwich, such as the "Managing Academic Workloads Project" <http://ugflex.blogspot.com/2010/06/university-of-greenwich-balanced.html> and externally, notably 'PiP' at Strathclyde, 'Viewpoints' at Ulster, 'PALET' at Cardiff and 'T-SPARC' at Birmingham City <http://ugflex.blogspot.com/2010/06/report-back-on-viewpoints-project.html> Where appropriate steps have been taken to ensure that the issues and solutions being proposed and piloted are shared with colleagues at Greenwich. For example in July 2010 the Project Manager organised an event for subject librarians to share the findings emerging from UG-Flex and other projects in the curriculum design programme.
- Numerous 1-2-1 meetings have taken place between the project manager/business analyst and individual members of staff who have an interest in enhancing curriculum design processes and supporting systems.
- In this reporting period the Project Manager has arranged meetings with the three Deputy Vice Chancellors at Greenwich, presented at the University's Education Liaison Unit Conference "How Flexible Can HE be (are we)? (June 2010) <http://ugflex.blogspot.com/2010/06/university-of-greenwich-asks-how.html> and contributed to an away day for staff from Learning & Quality and Education Development (July 2010);
- Two members of the project team attended a CAMEL meeting hosted by BCU in September 2010. A report can be found at: <http://ugflex.blogspot.com/2010/10/project-cluster-programme-meetings.html>

Section Eight: Collaboration and Support

Contact with the JISC programme manager, critical friends and support team has continued throughout this reporting period and is valued highly. The project does not have any specific needs or requests at this stage over and above the support we currently receive.

Section Nine: Financial Statement
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Please refer to separate Excel file: <i>UG-Flex Budget Report to JISC 31.10.10</i>
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