

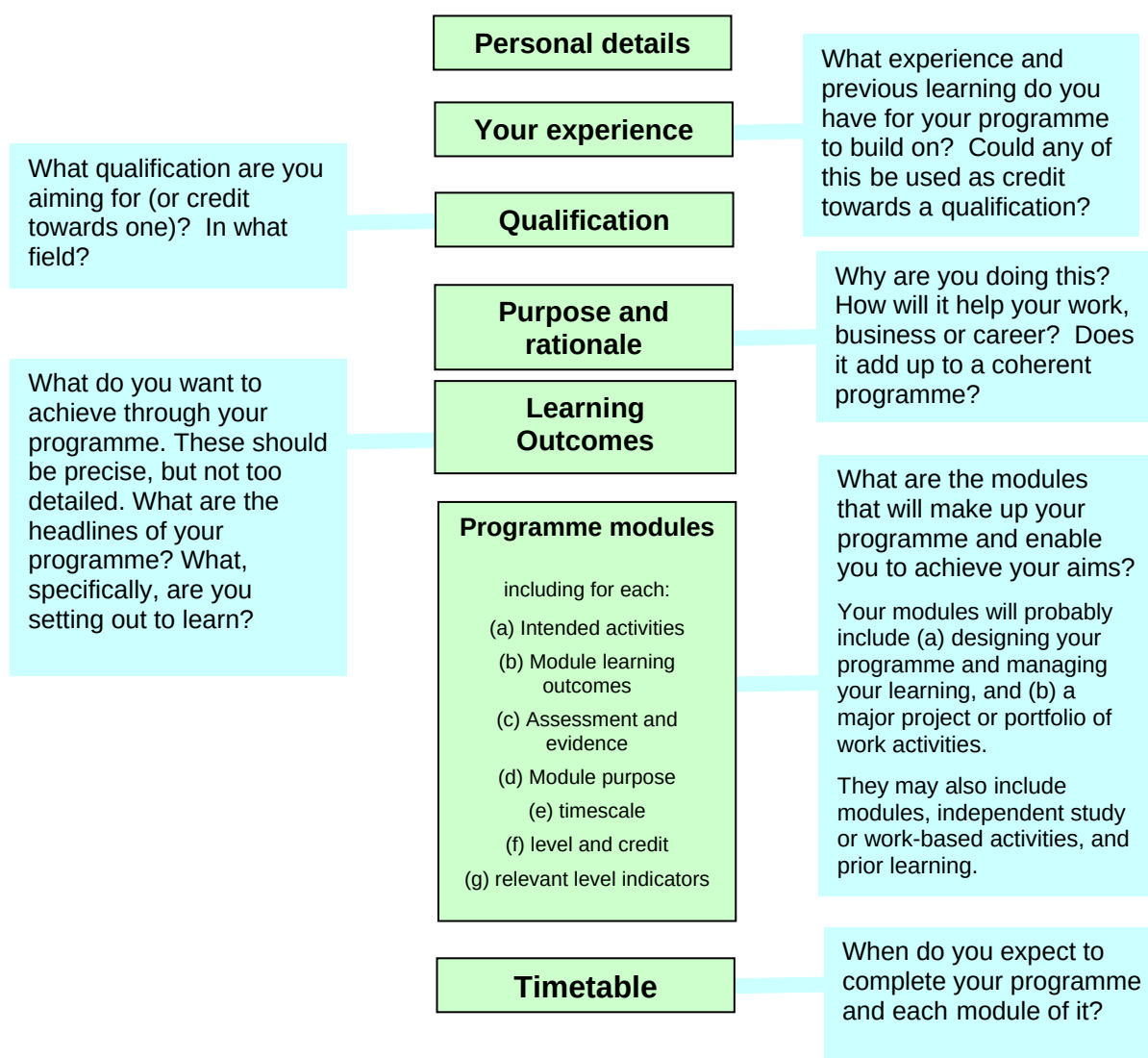
Step by step guide to developing an LtW learning plan

1. Introduction

This guide is designed to assist you through the process of completing the LtW learning plan.

This guide should be used alongside the User Guide for Learners which can be downloaded from System Help in the Support and Advice menu. This will help you with using the website as a whole and includes 'click by click' instructions on using this part of the site.

The diagram below shows how the Contract is structured.



You are strongly advised to make use of the tutorial support that is available to you when developing your Plan. You can contact your tutor through the site's dialogue facility and s/he will be well-placed to offer you personalised help and support in developing your plan.

You do not need to work through the plan in any particular order, and it may be useful to complete several sections in outline before firming up on the detail. The Learning Plan is the means used to negotiate an individual learning programme and register it with a university for a qualification (or for credit).

The Learning Plan sets out your individual learning programme and the reasoning behind it and It provides:

- a tool to help you design a unique programme of learning to meet your needs
- information needed by the university or awarding body to register your programme for a qualification (or credit towards one).

In the learning contract you provide a rationale for your programme design. This is done by reviewing your past and current experience and reflecting on the learning that you have done as a part of your work. It's important to note that you don't get credit for doing your work; you get credit for the learning that occurs from reflection on your work.

It is anticipated that you will make initial comments against each section and then you will redraft these with the help of your tutor, expanding, editing and reshaping the comments by reflecting on your experiences.

2. Learning plan overview



The overview (or introduction) part of the Learning Plan is accessed from the learning Plan menu. Here you will complete information on:

- Work related experience
- Where you are now
- Relevant qualifications
- Award details

Work Related Experience

You will need to describe what your programme will be building on in terms of your experience and previous learning. This involves giving a reflective account of your relevant experience - not just a CV-type description - which shows you are ready to work on the programme you are creating. Do have a look at the Support Materials available - particularly '*Reviewing your experience*', also, a useful reference tool here is '*Reflecting on your experience*'.

Do identify in this section any in-house training that you have undertaken, again reflecting on the learning that was involved and how this has impacted on you and your job.

You may also be able to sketch out things that could contribute to a claim for credit for your previous learning. If you have experience that you will be building on with your programme, you may have the basis of a claim for credit that will form one of the modules of your programme. You will need to make a separate claim for this and you will find it useful to view the *Prior Learning* information that you will find under the *Support Materials* menu item.

This will offer you an insight into what is required to make a claim and also to review the value that the scheme places upon prior learning in the work place. Please note that detailed individual APL guidance must be sought from your tutor.

Where you are now

This is where you identify your needs and opportunities for learning. It also requires an assessment of where you are now in relation to your intended programme - what your key strengths and abilities are, whether there are any areas that you want to develop further; how you are likely to be affected by future changes; and whether you need any additional skills to achieve your goals or take you in the direction you want.

Try using the following Support Materials:

- *Reviewing where you are now*
- *Self audit.*

Relevant qualifications

This is essential background for any learning plan. List here any qualifications that you already hold that are relevant to what you want to do with your LtW programme.

Award Details

This section consists of an outline of your Purpose in undertaking your programme along with some information about the title of the award you are working towards (if relevant) and the credit requirements for it.

Within the **purpose** section you should start to plan your programme by thinking ahead:

- **Why** are you undertaking this programme?
- **What** you are aiming to achieve?
- **How** will your negotiated programme help you to achieve this?

You will need to show that your programme provides a coherent step towards what you are aiming to achieve. You may want to do a rough draft of this section, and come back to it after you have worked on other sections of the learning plan.

At this stage, don't go into a lot of detail about what you want the programme to cover. You will build up the details in the next two stages, on programme learning outcomes and programme modules.

Again you may find the Support Materials – particularly *Putting forward a rationale* - useful in the development of this section.

The **award title** and **intended qualification** fields should be completed in consultation with your tutor.

3. Programme Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are fundamental to your LTW programme, there are two types of learning outcome – programme learning outcomes, which summarise, in general, the learning for the whole programme, and module learning outcomes, which identify the learning that will be assessed within the individual modules.

Learning outcomes should not describe learning activities, but focus on what you need to understand and be able to do when you have completed the programme: they identify the broad goals of your learning. Don't go into detail at this stage, as that will be done in the individual modules of your programme. In a major programme you might have, as a guide, between three and seven main outcomes.

Ideally Programme Learning Outcomes will identify:

- The knowledge and understanding that you will gain during your programme (eg Knowledge of management models and the role of leadership; research methodologies)
- The intellectual skills that you will develop (e.g. Critical evaluation, appraisal)
- The practical skills that you will develop (e.g. Ability to undertake research; to utilise specific equipment in your work place)
- The transferable skills (e.g. time management; report writing)

4. Modules

Programme modules are the 'building blocks' that make up your programme. They are normally given a credit-rating and are at the level of the qualification you are aiming to achieve (or, for a qualification such as a degree which is made up of stages at different levels, they should be at the level of the appropriate stage). Most individually designed LtW programmes will contain at least two key modules:

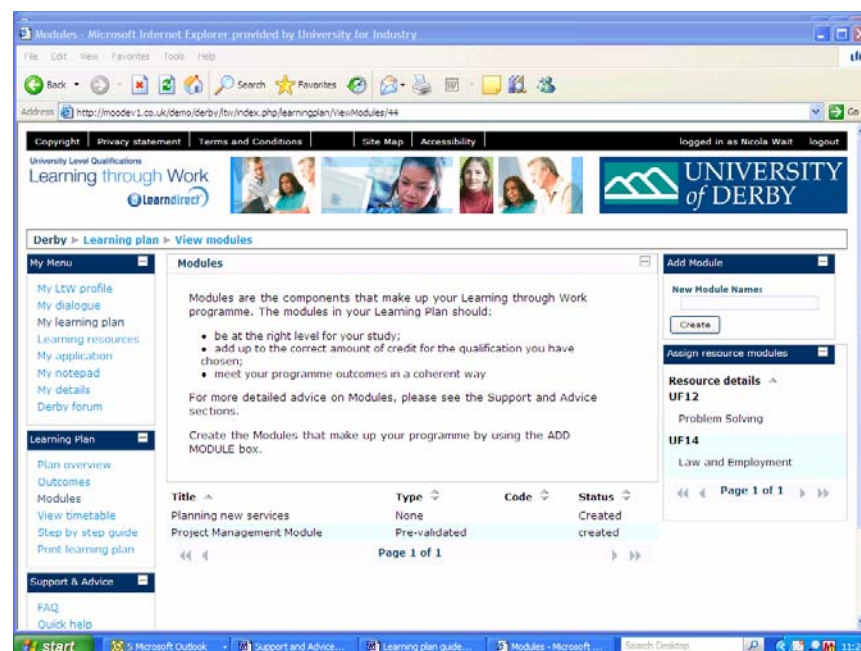
- planning, managing and reviewing your learning (of which drawing up and reviewing the learning plan forms a part)
- a work-based project or portfolio of work-based activities.

Most programmes are likely to include other modules such as:

- distance or on-line modules, or training activities
- independent study or other work-based activities
- a claim for credit for prior learning (APEL).

For example, another postgraduate diploma might consist of 40 credits for prior learning; 15 credits for planning, managing and reviewing learning; an on-line module valued at 15 credits; an investigative activity valued at 10 credits; and a work-based project of 30 credits.

Completing the module details



This is where you start to provide the details of each of your modules. The first step is to use the 'Add Module' box, giving your module a name – click on 'create' and the name will then appear in your list of modules in the central area of the screen.

Clicking on the name of the module in the central screen allows you to go on to develop the details of that module. There are several fields to be completed for each of your modules:

1. Module Title: Choose something that reflects the flavour of the module and is a title that you would find useful to have on a credit transcript /record of your studies. For example:

- Developing training packages
- Professional development planning
- Writing for publication
- Team development & Motivation within a change environment

2. Type of module. There are four types of modules that can be included within learning plans:

▪ **A claim for accreditation of prior learning**

If, upon reflecting and reviewing your experience, you feel that you may be able to make a claim for credit for your prior learning you should review the guidance materials in the Support and Advice menu. If you feel that you are able to provide sufficient evidence to make a claim then please do ask your tutor about it and check that your claim is at the appropriate level and the potential credit value of the claim. If your tutor agrees then include a module for APL within your learning plan.

▪ **Something that you have created for yourself (sometimes referred to as a Negotiated Module)**

It may be that you are clear about what you would like to learn within one of your modules, which may be linked to a project at work. In this case you will be identifying what you are going to learn and how you are going to learn it, together with how you would like to be assessed, in negotiation with your tutor and possibly your workplace.

Or, you may have identified a training course that would meet your knowledge needs, but does not have academic credit at the correct level. You could use this as a basis for your learning, perhaps providing a portfolio that documents the learning process and how you have applied it at work.

▪ **A module designed by your employer etc.**

You should only choose this option if you have discussed it with your tutor. It could be that you are undertaking a programme of study that directly relates to a course that your employer has provided in your work place. After

negotiation with the University, it may be possible to incorporate aspects within your LTW plan. If this is the case then you should suggest this type of component.

▪ **A pre-designed module**

If you have agreed with your tutor that you will be taking a module that is offered by your (or another) university or college **or** if you are using one of the LtW Learning Resources as a module within your plan, then this is the module type that you should select. In this case the learning outcomes and assessment method are already determined for you and should be copied directly into the relevant fields.

When you choose a taught module from another programme you will be treated as any other student undertaking the module. This means that you will be subject to the same study schedules and hand in dates as other students taking the module. They may be taught on campus, by paper-based distance or e-learning. If you are thinking of including a pre-designed module into your programme you should consider the following:

- o The delivery method. If it's a taught module are you able to attend the teaching sessions?
- o The timescale. Can you schedule your work around the timescale for the module? When is the module available?
- o Sequence. Are there any pre- requisites for the module? (e.g. for advanced CAD you must have studied introductory CAD) What is the most logical sequence for you to take the modules?
- o Assessment. Are you able to fulfil the assessment requirements? Do they meet your needs?
- o Fees: do you have funding to support any potential additional cost?

Where you are including a pre-designed module you will still need to enter module details into your learning plan. Learning outcomes and evidence for assessment must not be changed.

3. Level and Credits. Enter the level of the module and the number of credits that will be attached to it. For self designed modules you should discuss this with your tutor prior to entering these details. You should also check out the Support and Advice documents that refer to level. The number of credits is also important. One credit normally represents around ten hours of learning effort and traditionally these are accumulated into modules of 10, 15, 20 or 30 credits. Do negotiate this carefully with your tutor.

4. Start and end dates. Enter here some proposed dates to start and finish your study to help you plan your academic work in line with your employment and your personal life. For pre-designed modules you will need to identify the dates for the module and put them in here.

You will not be held rigidly to these dates (if this is a self designed module) but they are useful for you and your tutor to monitor your progress and your intended sequence of modules. It is also helpful to plan your work to help you set your own targets in advance of the assessment board deadlines, which are set by your university.

5. Module Code. You will only need to enter this if the module is an existing (rather than self-designed) one. Your tutor will have the information you need to enter here.

6. Purpose. What are you hoping to achieve by undertaking this module? Why is this particular module include in your programme? How does it fit in with your previous learning (both through study and through workplace activities) and how will it meet your personal and professional development needs?

7. Assigned Programme Outcomes. Here you will be able to see the Programme Learning Outcomes that you have entered previously and attach one or more to each of your modules. You need to decide which of your Programme Learning Outcomes will be met by this component, as clearly all of them will not be met in each module! Make sure, when designing modules that each of your Programme Outcomes are relevant to at least one module.

8. Intended activities. In this section you need to indicate what you will do to achieve your learning outcomes. This is likely to include: reading (give samples of key texts) investigating, comparing, negotiating, piloting.

What learning activities will you undertake to help you to achieve your aims and objectives? Perhaps you will be reviewing literature and evaluating your practice against this theory? Alternatively, you may attend an in house training course and wish to use this, with additional reading and research to inform your learning.

If this is a pre-designed module then you will enter the indicative content for the module here.

9. Module Learning Outcomes Module learning outcomes are statements of what you will be able to do as a result of learning activities within this particular module. They will be related to your acquisition and demonstration of knowledge, understanding and intellectual and / or practical skills.

If you are taking a pre-designed module then you should copy and paste the pre-designed learning outcomes here. Do not change them!

Formulating learning outcomes, for self-designed modules, is a crucial part of the learning planning process and you are advised to access the guidance and examples that can be found in the Support and Advice menu.

10. Methods of Assessment and Intended Evidence. What will you submit as evidence that you have met your learning outcomes and selected level indicators? For pre-designed modules you should copy and paste this from the module outline. Do not change it.

Remember that, for self designed modules, you can use more innovative forms of assessment than an essay. Think of ways of providing the evidence that you would use in your working practice e.g. a project report or portfolio of evidence. Perhaps you could design a training tool for your workplace or produce an academic poster suitable for display at a conference? You could use this as a part of the evidence for a component.

Your tutor will help you to decide on the most appropriate assessment for each of your modules. You should also look at the assessment and evidence resources that you can access through the Support and Advice menu block.

11. Assigned Indicators These are based on nationally agreed standards and help you and your tutor to ensure that you are working at the correct academic level. You must choose the ones that are most relevant to the module. They will be used in conjunction with the learning outcomes to assess the evidence that you provide. As with the aims ensure that all your modules for a stage meet all the level indicators.

5. Timetable

You will need to check that the modules you have planned fit into a manageable sequence, and leave you enough time to prepare evidence for assessment. The learning plan includes an interactive calendar which allows you to view your overall programme on one screen, then focus in on detail and if necessary go back to the learning modules screens to change details.

If approved by the university, the completed plan becomes the formal document on which your qualification or credit is based.