



# Course Development

## Job Aid

This job aid describes the design and development of face-to-face and online courses and identifies helpful resources for developing a course.

## What is Course Development?

Course development is the process by which you plan and design the structure of a course and then create the modules and materials for that course. Course development usually takes place in the context of revising existing courses or in response to the need for a new course in a program or micro-credential.

A well-developed course

- identifies what learners will know or be able to do at the end of the course.
- determines what prior knowledge and experience learners need to study the topic.
- ensures that the course reflects program requirements.



**TIP:** Learning and Teaching Centre (LTC) is available to help you with course development. An easy first step is to contact your LTC School Liaison.

Course development takes place in two stages:

- Design
- Development

### Design

Design involves planning a learning experience for a given context by identifying and aligning expectations for learning with assessments and learning/teaching activities.

#### Step 1. Determine the Context

Before designing a course, ensure that your course is relevant, suitable in scope, level-appropriate, and well aligned with the program focus and requirements. Consult with your program head, the associate dean, and instructors who teach prerequisite courses or courses for which your course is prerequisite as part of your context scoping.

Ask the following:

- How does your course relate to the program goals?
- What are the **requirements in courses that come before or after yours in the program's** progression (learning outcomes, major topics, assessment, and learning/teaching activities)?
- Who are your learners (previous knowledge, learning abilities)?
- How many learners may take the course?
- How long is the course (weeks)?
- What are the total credits (and therefore hours) of the course?
- How will the course be taught? (online/face to face/blended)
- What type of course is it? (lab, practicum, theory)
- Is the course best delivered by team teaching, multiple instructors or one instructor?

Information like this will help you position your course in the program curriculum, avoid gaps and redundancies with other courses and identify learning outcomes that will enable you to start your teaching at an appropriate level. (See the document, Conduct a Learner and Context Scan available on the LTC Resources webpage).

### Step 2: Design Learning Outcomes/Competencies

**Determine the scope of the course's** learning and describe the expected benchmark knowledge, behaviours, skills and attitudes a learner should demonstrate to successfully pass the course. Think about where they came from before this course and where they are going after the course to ensure the learning outcomes/competencies are written **at the right level for this course's learners**. (See the job aids, Course Learning Outcomes and Course Competency Statements available on the LTC Resources webpage).

### Step 3: Ensure Alignment

Align learning outcomes/competencies with assessments and learning/teaching activities:

- outline a plan for evaluation that assesses learners' **achievement of learning** outcomes/competencies.
- **list broad ideas for learning/teaching activities that support learners' achievement of the** learning outcomes/competencies.
- map out your course using the document, Course Map template available on the LTC Resources webpage. Have a peer review the Course Map for additional perspective.

Bigg's Constructive Alignment ensures "**constructive alignment**" (shown in **Diagram 1**) among learning outcomes/competencies, assessment methods, and learning/teaching activities. This alignment has a learner-centered focus that ensures that:

- all learning outcomes are addressed and assessed.
- assessment methods are aligned with learning outcomes and are meaningful and related to real life tasks.
- learner workload is balanced during the term and more emphasis is given to major or more difficult learning outcomes.
- instructional strategies and the design of learning activities foster active learning, accommodate diverse learning preferences and accessibility, and help learners achieve the learning outcomes.

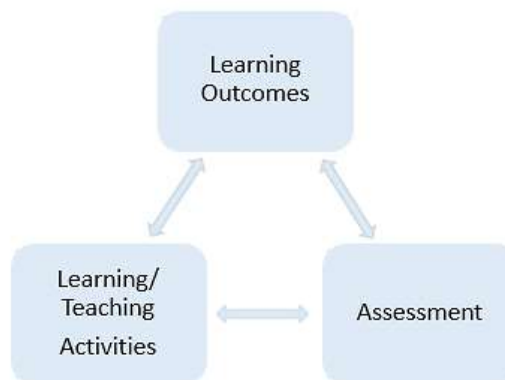


Diagram 1: Bigg's Constructive Alignment (Adapted from Biggs, 1999.)

Many educators suggest using the Backward Design Model (shown in Diagram 2) when designing a course as it helps you achieve constructive alignment. A practical benefit of using this model is staying focused on what you want to achieve without overwhelming your learners and yourself.

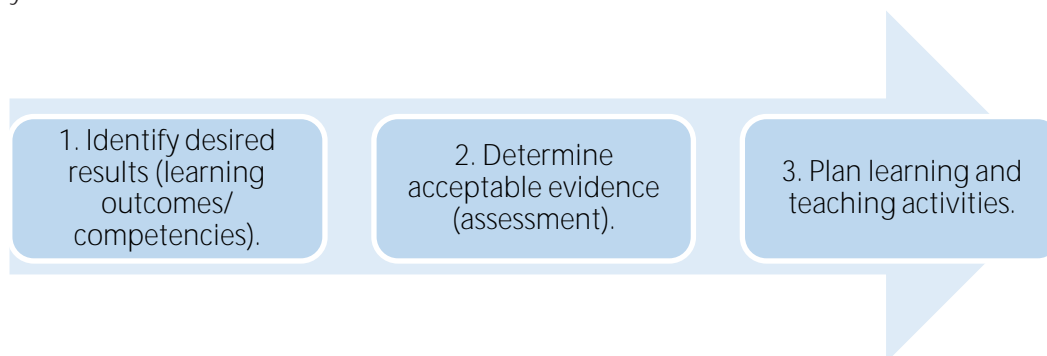


Diagram 2: Stages of Backward Design (Adapted from Wiggins, G. P., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design* (2nd ed.). Pearson.)

#### Step 4: Create a Course Outline

Once you have completed Steps 1-3 **and have ensured constructive alignment in your course, it's time to** create a course outline. BCIT course outlines are seen as contractual documents between the instructor and learner and are governed by policy documents that impact course outline development. Ensure you refer to these policy documents, available under Education on the BCIT Policies webpage, when creating your course outline:

- Policy 5403: Course Outlines and Course Names
- Procedure 5403-PR1: Course Outlines Process
- Procedure 5403-PR2: Course Names Process
- Policy 5012: Assigning of Credits to Courses
- Course Outline Template

Have your course outline approved by your program head, associate dean and, as required the School Quality Committee (SQC) before you move onto the development stage. (See the online resource, **BCIT Course Change Guidelines for more information**).

## Development

The next step is to create the lessons and materials for your course. Note that course development is not a clear, linear process as the developer must continually refer back to the design documents to ensure that lessons and materials are adjusted as necessary to reflect the core components of the design.

This job aid highlights the design and development stages of course development; however, it is important to note that these two stages are part of a larger course development model called ADDIE. This commonly used model stands for: Analysis, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate. Each stage guides iterations and improvements before moving to the next one. (See the online resource, *Teaching in a Digital Age*, Tony Bates 4.3 The ADDIE model for more information).

### Lesson Plans

All instructors plan for learning, especially novice instructors. Lesson plans provide guidance for teaching and learning throughout the course. They are a crucial tool for reviewing and improving your course.

- The number of lessons will depend on the context for the course.
- Prepare a lesson plan for each lesson. (See the job aid, Preparing Lesson Plans available on the LTC Resources webpage).

### Course Materials

Educational materials that support teaching and learning can be developed iteratively with lesson plans. Examples include a PowerPoint presentation, course notes, assignments, videos, online course webpages and more. (See the job aids, Designing and Using Visuals and Preparing and Using Student Handouts available on the LTC Resources webpage).

If you plan to use educational materials such as texts or readings, you make sure that they are available in the BCIT Bookstore before the first class, as BCIT faculty are prohibited from selling materials directly to the students.

If you are using course materials developed by others, you need to ensure that you are respecting copyright restrictions. The BCIT Library copyright experts can support you every step of the way.

## What's Next?

Review your course design:

- Review the BCIT Course Outline Policies and Procedures for designing a course.
- Review your design documents to ensure alignment across the course.
- Revisit all your course content to ensure that it clearly serves the purpose of the course.

Once a course is ready for implementation, feedback should be gathered in the form of course evaluations, learner performance, and informal classroom assessment techniques. This feedback is used to evaluate the course design and make evidence-based changes as part of good course maintenance.