

## // SAMPLE PROCESS | SUPPORT FOR DEGREE PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

The goal of degree programme development is to fundamentally revise the design of a degree programme or to develop a new degree programme based on a valid situation analysis, through reliable process planning and using a structured methodological framework.

Degree programmes have a complex structure that is made up of courses, modules and examinations; legal and subject-specific requirements; teaching principles; and academic freedom. The curriculum is the content and conceptual core of a degree programme and can be defined as a structured programme of study with specific academic objectives, admission requirements and module components that follow the principle of sequencing and a logical construction process.

The Office for Quality Management in Teaching and Studies (StQE) can actively support and accompany the process of developing or fundamentally revising a degree programme by providing quality management findings (key figures and survey data), moderating a curriculum workshop or offering tailored programmes within the context of higher education teaching and learning.

The authorship of the curriculum design remains with the department at all times and in all respects. Accordingly, the department also decides independently what the concrete mandate and specific role of the StQE will be within the development of the degree programme.

### STAGES AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The process of developing or fundamentally revising a degree programme is divided into three stages. This process usually begins with a more or less explicit *planning stage* in which the main objectives and framework for the subsequent *work stage* are defined. By the end of the work stage, the key elements of the degree programme have usually been established. These are then agreed on and approved within the department or faculty in a *review stage*.

The diagramme in Figure 1 aligns the internal faculty process of degree programme development with the committee procedure regulated in the Quality Management Handbook (QMH). The internal faculty process is always planned according to the faculty's specific needs and circumstances and coordinated with the committee procedure. Accordingly, the process described here serves only as a guide for faculty-specific planning.

Schematic representation of the development of a degree programme

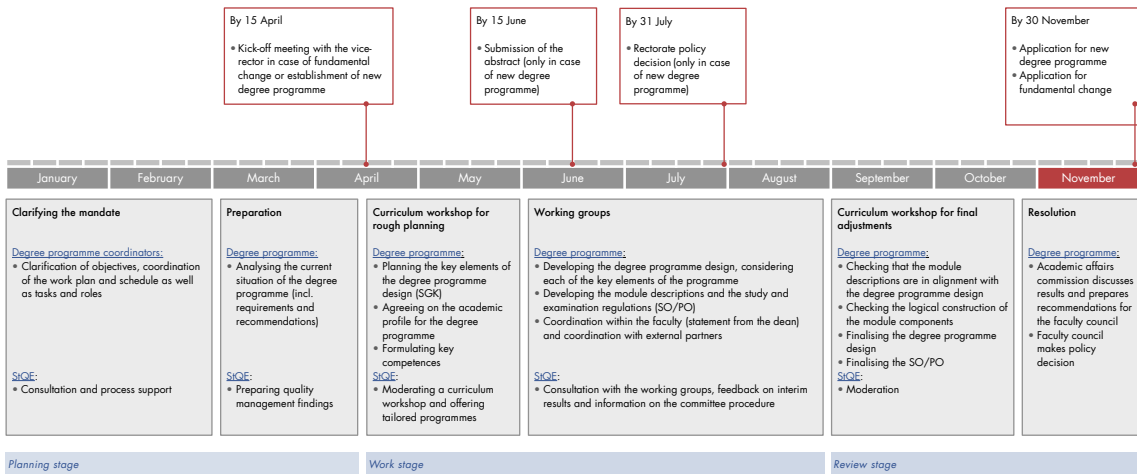


Figure 1: Schematic representation of the development of a degree programme (go to the end of the document to see a larger figure)

## 1. Planning stage

The planning stage essentially allows the participants to develop a common understanding for the motivation behind the process, set specific goals and discuss content requirements (e.g. faculty and UL strategy papers and the academic framework for German university degrees) and any organisational constraints (including personnel and financial resources). The outcome of this stage is a coordinated work plan and schedule, as well as certainty about who will be involved in the process and when and how they will participate. The following key questions arise in this stage:

- Which representatives of the degree programme will be actively involved at the working level?
- Who will approve (interim) results (e.g. academic affairs commission or the institute council)?
- What findings and data can be used to analyse the current situation or still need to be obtained?
- What role will the StQE representatives play in the process?

### Support in the planning stage

- preparation of empirical findings from quality management
- support with planning the process so that it follows the committee procedure

## 2. Work stage

The work stage is the actual core of the process. The results of this stage are key elements (e.g. academic objectives, entry profiles, areas of competence and acquisition outlook) of the degree programme that can be used to write an abstract for the rectorate policy decision.

In the further course of the process, working groups refine the academic objectives of the degree programme and draft the study documents (study and examination regulations, module descriptions and if applicable cooperation agreements).

The work stage can also include a curriculum workshop that will facilitate the departmental discussion of the key elements of the degree programme to be developed or fundamentally revised. The curriculum workshop is tailored to the specific situation of the degree programme and the goals of the process and is structured based on proven concepts of curriculum development<sup>1</sup> (e.g. constructive alignment<sup>2</sup> and backward design<sup>3</sup>).

In the curriculum workshop, the participants typically develop or revise the design of the degree programme through the following steps:

0. Analysing the current situation (e.g. discussion of evaluation results, degree programme reports, key data, accreditation reports, recommendations from professional associations and professional practice, and good-practice examples from UL and other universities)
1. Setting academic objectives (identifying possible professional fields and defining academic profiles of graduates)
2. Establishing admission requirements and the profile of prospective students
3. Developing the content and methodological design of the degree programme (e.g. areas of competence, milestones of the programme and design of examinations)

### Support during the work stage

- moderation of a curriculum workshop for rough planning
- input on specific topics in teaching and learning in higher education (e.g. focus on skills, research focus or digitalisation)
- moderation of working groups according to need and for specific topics

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1 Curriculum development for a degree programme is a continuous process of adapting the content and methodology of the curriculum to changing circumstances and new societal demands.

2 The core idea of constructive alignment is to first determine what students are supposed to learn (intended learning outcomes) as well as how to determine that students have actually achieved the learning outcomes (assessment). Based on these objectives, it is important to consider what teaching and learning activities are necessary to ensure that students acquire specific content or develop certain skills (cf. John Biggs and Catherine Tang (2011)): *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*. Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press. Fourth Edition.

3 cf. Sylvia Ruschin: Expertenaustausch auf Augenhöhe. "Beitrag der Hochschuldidaktik zur Curriculumentwicklung," pp. 368–377. In: Antonia Scholkmann, Birgit Szczyrba, Niclas Schaper, and Robert Kordts-Freudinger (2021): *Handbuch Hochschuldidaktik*. ut

// PLANNING FRAMEWORK – DEVELOPMENT OF A DEGREE PROGRAMME DESIGN

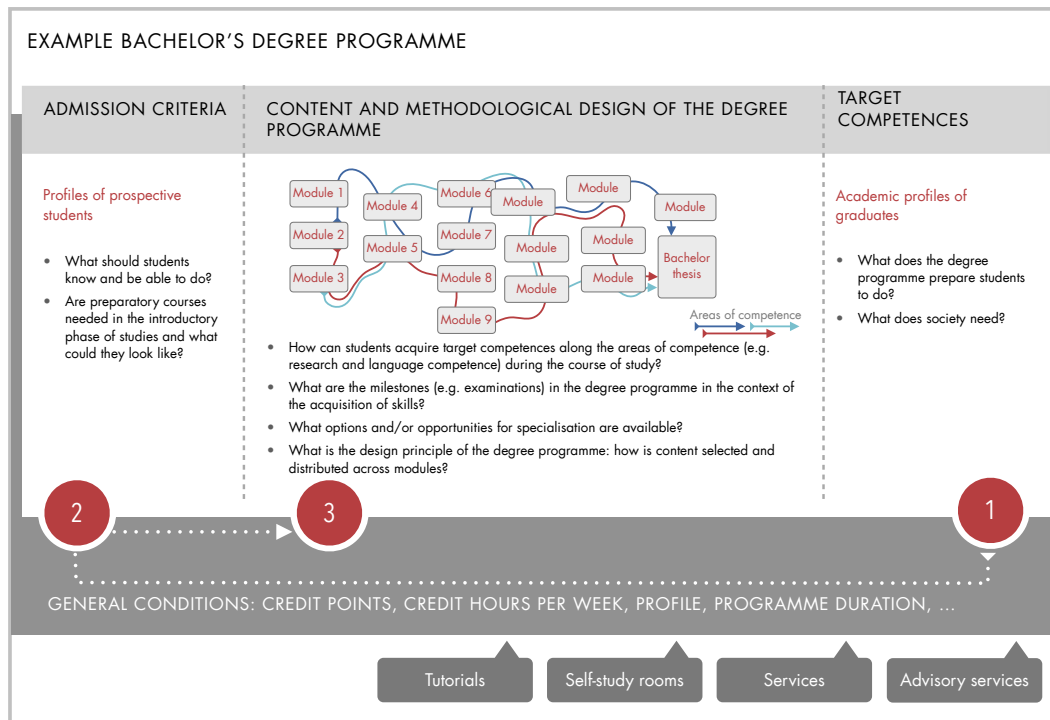


Figure 2: Planning framework for the development of a degree programme (go to the end of the document to see a larger figure)

### 3. Review stage

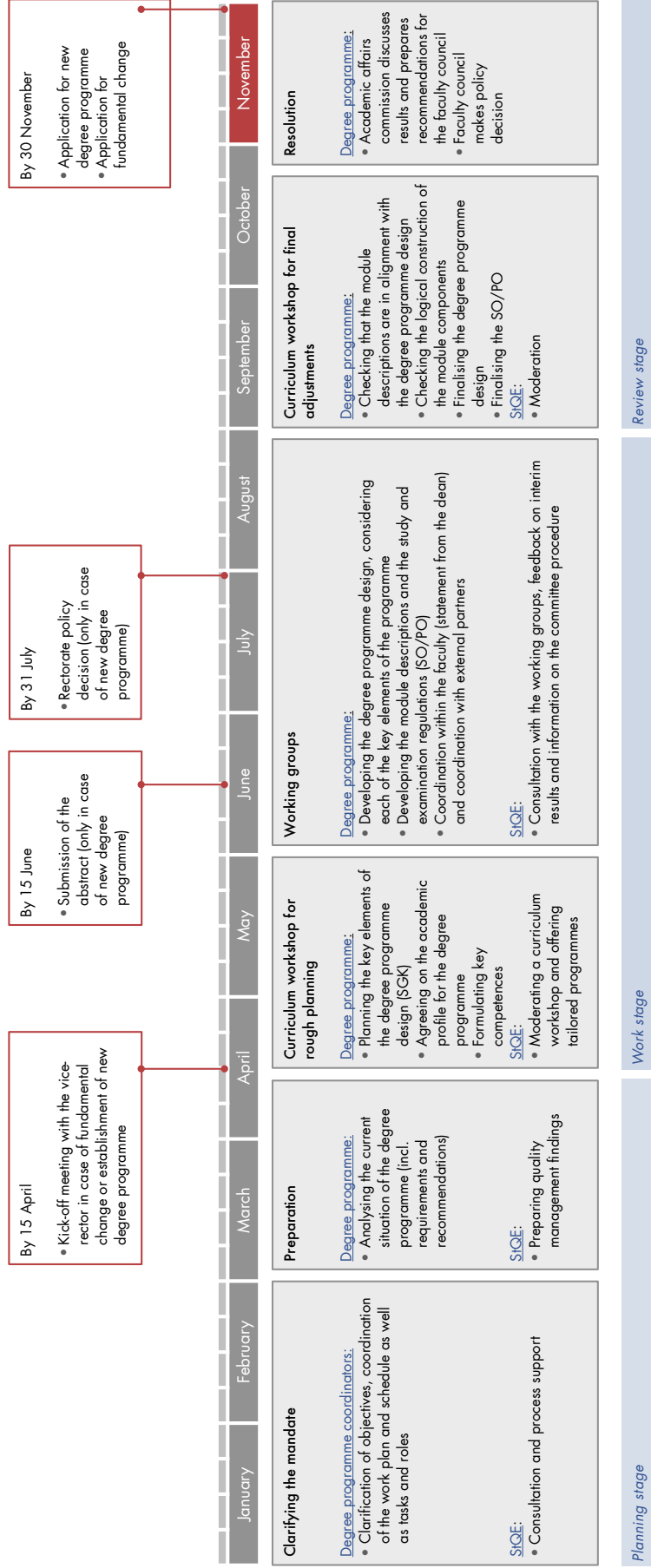
This stage is devoted to reviewing the documents created in their entirety. At the end of the review stage, the study documents created will be checked and then authorised by resolutions passed in the relevant faculty committees.

To support this process, it is recommended that an additional curriculum workshop be held to make any final adjustments with the representatives from the department. In order to ensure the coherence of the modules created and check that they are in alignment (“common thread”) with the degree programme design, they are considered together here. This way specific details can be readjusted as necessary.

#### Support in the review stage

- moderation of a curriculum workshop for making any final adjustments (checking the logical construction of the module components)
- assessment of the study documents against the background of central requirements and the components needed for approval by the Rectorate Commission on Teaching, Study and Examination (LSP)

## Schematic representation of the development of a degree programme



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