

2023-8

Pan University Modules (UEM discussion paper)

Barry J. Ryan

Technological University Dublin, barry.ryan@tudublin.ie


Fionnuala Darby

Technological University Dublin, fionnuala.darby@tudublin.ie

Shaun Ferns

Technological University Dublin, shaun.fern@tudublin.ie

Follow this and additional works at: <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/totalarcprep>

 Part of the [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ryan, Barry J.; Darby, Fionnuala; and Ferns, Shaun, "Pan University Modules (UEM discussion paper)" (2023). *Group Reports*. 27.

<https://arrow.tudublin.ie/totalarcprep/27>

This Working Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Reports at ARROW@TU Dublin. It has been accepted for inclusion in Group Reports by an authorized administrator of ARROW@TU Dublin. For more information, please contact arrow.admin@tudublin.ie, aisling.coyne@tudublin.ie, vera.kilshaw@tudublin.ie.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License](#).

Fundamental 6

Discussion Paper

Opportunity is afforded to students to elect to take common modules, TU Pillar Modules at School, Faculty or University level.

The [TU Dublin Strategic Intent to 2030](#) clearly articulates our goal of nurturing bright minds through enhanced learning experiences, enabled by a transformative model of education and, therefore, create the most diverse and accessible university in Ireland with the most sought after digitally literate graduates. A central component of turning this aspiration into reality is the University Education Model.

Pillar Modules will:

- Provide a unique TU Dublin Experience.
- Embody the University vision and strategy.
- Be interdisciplinary and impactful for all learners.
- Support the integration of the TU Dublin Graduate Attributes within programmes.
- Have an existing academic home.

PILLAR 1 PEOPLE

Fostering individual and collective talents in an ever-changing world

We intend to ignite the imagination of students, staff and partners and support people to explore their abilities and reach their full potential.

PILLAR 2 PLANET

A Powerhouse for Living & Breathing Sustainability

We intend to address the challenges facing the world and impact positively on the planet and people, with ‘education’ as the engine.

PILLAR 3 PARTNERSHIP

Delivering Shared Impact

We intend to develop the most connected university; cultivating a network of discoverers, creators and entrepreneurs; engaging with people that make things happen.

There are many layers to the University Education Model landscape, one of these layers is the development of a university that enables learner agency through a learner choice approach. By providing pan-University “Pillar Modules,” aligned to the three pillars of our strategic intent of **People**, **Planet**, and **Partnership**, offers for a unique TU Dublin Experience. This design concept is grounded in stakeholder needs, as detailed in the [UEM Socialisation Report](#) where a **‘distinctive TU Dublin experience’** was highly valued.

This document provides a conceptual overview of the proposed TU Dublin Pillar Modules. In it, the Principles of a Pillar Module and options to integrate into the TU Dublin Programme Portfolio are detailed. Furthermore, a potential next step to connect Pillar Module(s) into coherent streams, and align with the concept of the TU Dublin Liberal Arts offering, is explored. Finally, synoptic recommendations are offered to assist in the translation of the concepts presented into main-stream practice in TU Dublin.



PRINCIPLES OF A PILLAR MODULE

A Pillar Module will provide a distinctive TU Dublin experience for all learners that is tailored to the needs of our increasingly diverse student population. This will be achieved by ensuring all Pillar Modules:

- **Embody the TU Dublin vision, values and strategy**, with a particular emphasis on actioning the equity and sustainability agendas.
- **Be exemplars of the University Education Model in practice**, specifically evidencing digital, inclusive and/or authentic learning experiences that are flexibly offered through multiple modalities.
- **Engage learners** through the shared experience(s) of addressing real-world challenges aligned to the TU Dublin strategic Pillars.
- **Be interdisciplinary**, exposing learners to new areas of knowledge and ways of thinking by bringing learners from different disciplines together.
- **Support learners** in their development of the TU Dublin Graduate Attributes/Outcomes.
- **Facilitate learner transformation** through high impact learning opportunities that are relevant to a student's learning path and relatable to their life.
- **Balance resource requirements** and impactful learning experiences through judicious and progressive resource restructuring.

A more extensive exploration of the individual Pillars, and exemplar modules, is provided in the Appendix.

EMBEDDING PILLAR MODULE(S) INTO THE TU DUBLIN PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO

Creating space in TU Dublin Curricula will be enabled by **Fundamental 4** of the [Brief from UET to the Faculties and Schools](#) (“*Opportunity is afforded to students to facilitate their involvement in choice within their learning pathways*”). With appropriate space created, there are three primary options to integrate Pillar Module(s) into the TU Dublin Programme Portfolio:

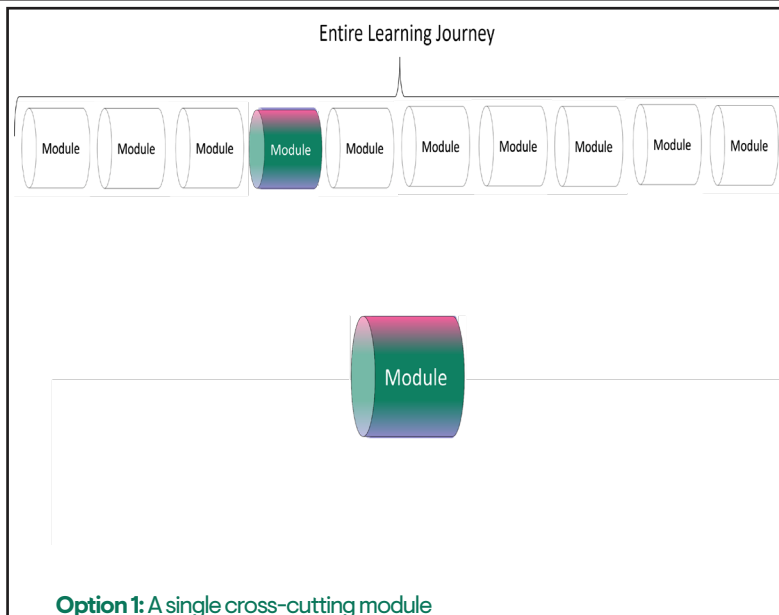
Option 1 - A single cross-cutting module (integrating People, Planet and Partnership), taken as a Free Elective.

Opportunities

A new module is required, therefore integration of the Principles of a Pillar Module can be achieved by design, rather than by retro-engineering. A holistic approach (integration of three pillars) will give learners a distinctive experience, but not dominate the space created by Fundamental 4.

Challenges

A single module delivered across the whole university requires judicious design and partnership teaching, supported by appropriate resource restructuring. Scaled delivery at Faculty-level will have limited interdisciplinarity and may curtail potential impactful learning opportunities.



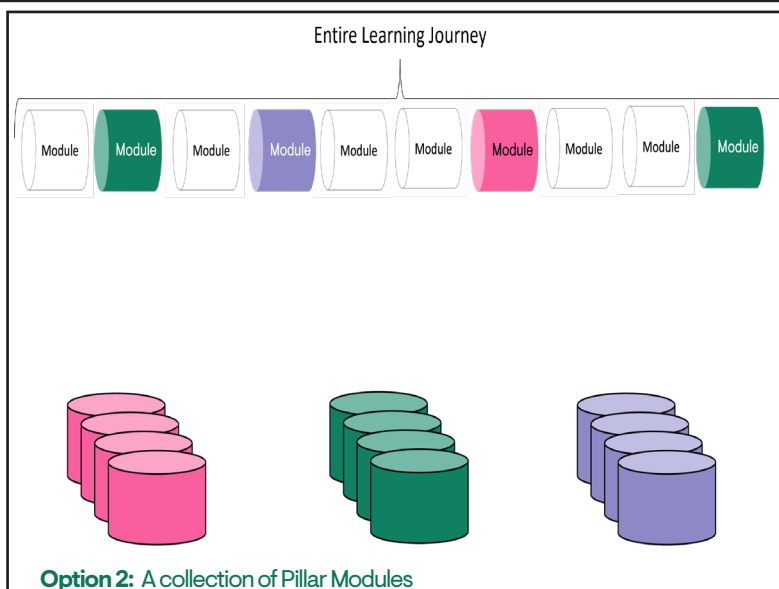
Option 2 - A collection of Pillar Modules, categorised under People, Planet and Partnership (with at least one module in each Pillar) where learners have agency to determine which, when and how they take their Pillar Module(s). *This is closely aligned to the existing Free Elective concept.

Opportunities

Existing modules, that demonstrate the Principles of a Pillar Module, could populate the People, Planet, Partnership module collection.

Challenges

Judicious resource restructuring will be needed to support staff and learners as alternative uses of existing modules are employed.

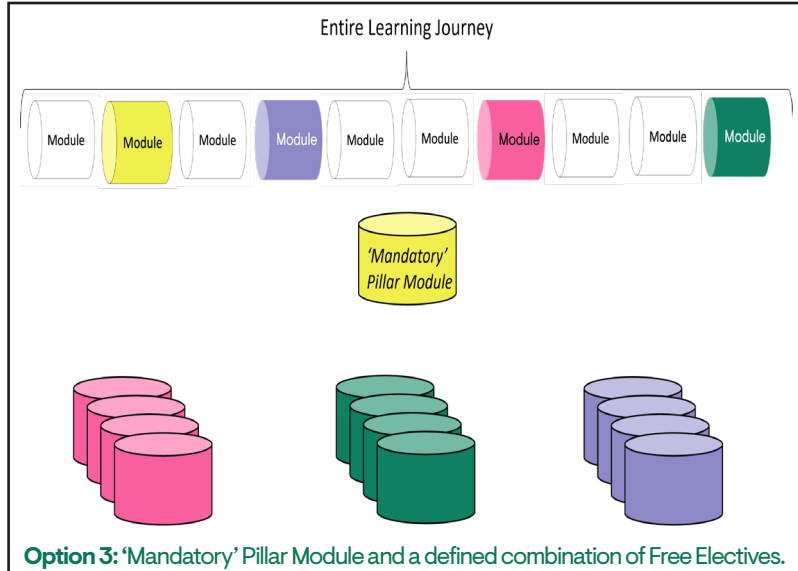


EMBEDDING PILLAR MODULE(S) INTO THE TU DUBLIN PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO

Option 3 - A combination of a 'Mandatory' Introductory Pillar Module (either an integrated Pillar Module or a module for each Pillar) combined with a selection of Free Electives within/ across each Pillar.

Opportunities/ Challenges

As a combination of Options One and Two, the opportunities and challenges of both options are also reflected in this Option



PILLAR MODULE RESOURCING

Based on the "Principles of a Pillar Module" that Pillar Modules should 'balance resource requirements and impactful learning experiences through judicious and progressive resource restructuring', four resourcing options present themselves:

- a) Use existing modules with no or limited changes
- b) Repackage/repurpose existing content to create new modules
- c) Combine existing modules/content in new formats, creating something new
- d) Create a new module, sharing resource needs

Options (a) and (b) may not create a set of genuinely distinctive modules and associated experiences that the Pillar Modules aim to provide. Options (c) and (d), however, have the possibility of embodying the characteristics of the Pillar Module, as detailed in the Principles of a Pillar Module. The practical realisation of Pillar Modules through Options (c) and (d) requires an exploration of the resource restructuring opportunities. The UET Fundamentals, as detailed in the 'Brief from UET to Faculties and Schools' is used as a compass for this exploration.

Fundamental 1 (*Academic module duplication across the University is minimised, with modules containing similar learning outcomes combined wherever possible*) may generate efficiencies that may be folded back into the Faculties.

Could Faculty resources be restructured to support the delivery of Pillar Modules combining Options 2 and C? Additionally, could a portion of any efficiencies created be reallocated to creating new Pillar Modules (Option 1 and d; see Figure 1)?

Fundamental 2 (*New academic modules are developed in a manner to achieve pedagogical foundations when delivered in multi-modal formats of in-person, on-line synchronous, and on-line asynchronous delivery*) details a multimodal approach to Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Feedback.

Could this Fundamental, along with sharing of resource needs across Faculties through partnership teaching, be employed to reduce the overall resource burden on the University (i.e. enhancing the Liberal Arts and Pillar Modules overlap)?

At Faculty Level

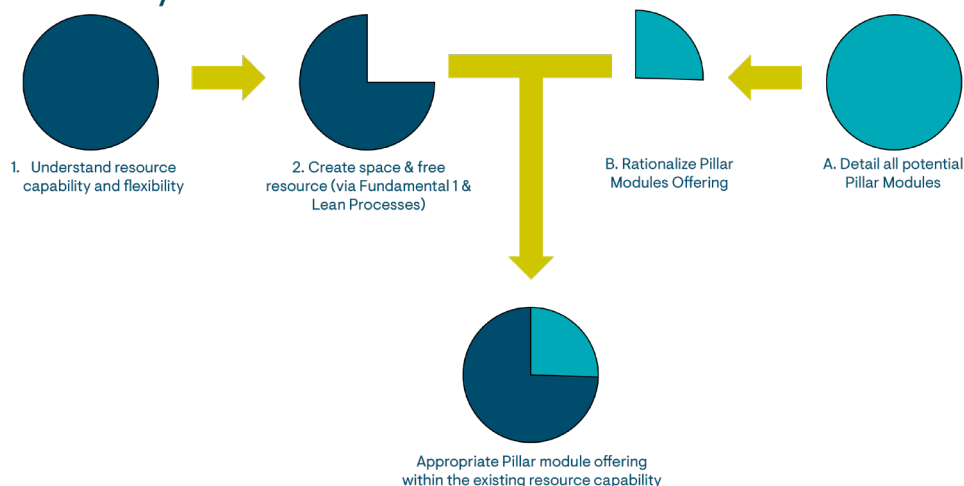


Figure 1: Schematic representation of how Faculty resources might be restructured to support the delivery of Pillar Modules through the reimagination of existing modules with opportunities for all learners to engage with these Pillar Modules promoting interdisciplinary.

EXTENDING PILLAR MODULES.

THE NEXT LAYER OF A DISTINCTIVE TU DUBLIN LEARNER EXPERIENCE.

Pillar Module(s) provides a template for, over time, the creation of a coherent arrangement of modules under each Pillar theme. This design would allow the learner to develop deep learning in an area distinctive from their core degree programme, if taken as a consolidated block of modules over the course of a learning journey.

Aligned to the Liberal Arts, but for learners not enrolled in the Liberal Arts programme, this would be a practical realisation of the strategic intent of **‘learning pathways for all’** and **‘flexibility in structure, mode & place of delivery to suit an evolving global landscape’**. This would be a distinctive feature for TU Dublin nationally and embody ‘Learner Choice’ as part of the University Education Model. Figure 2 overviews how Pillar Modules could be expanded, over time, to create a vibrant learning environment rich in learner agency and strongly aligned to the values of the University.

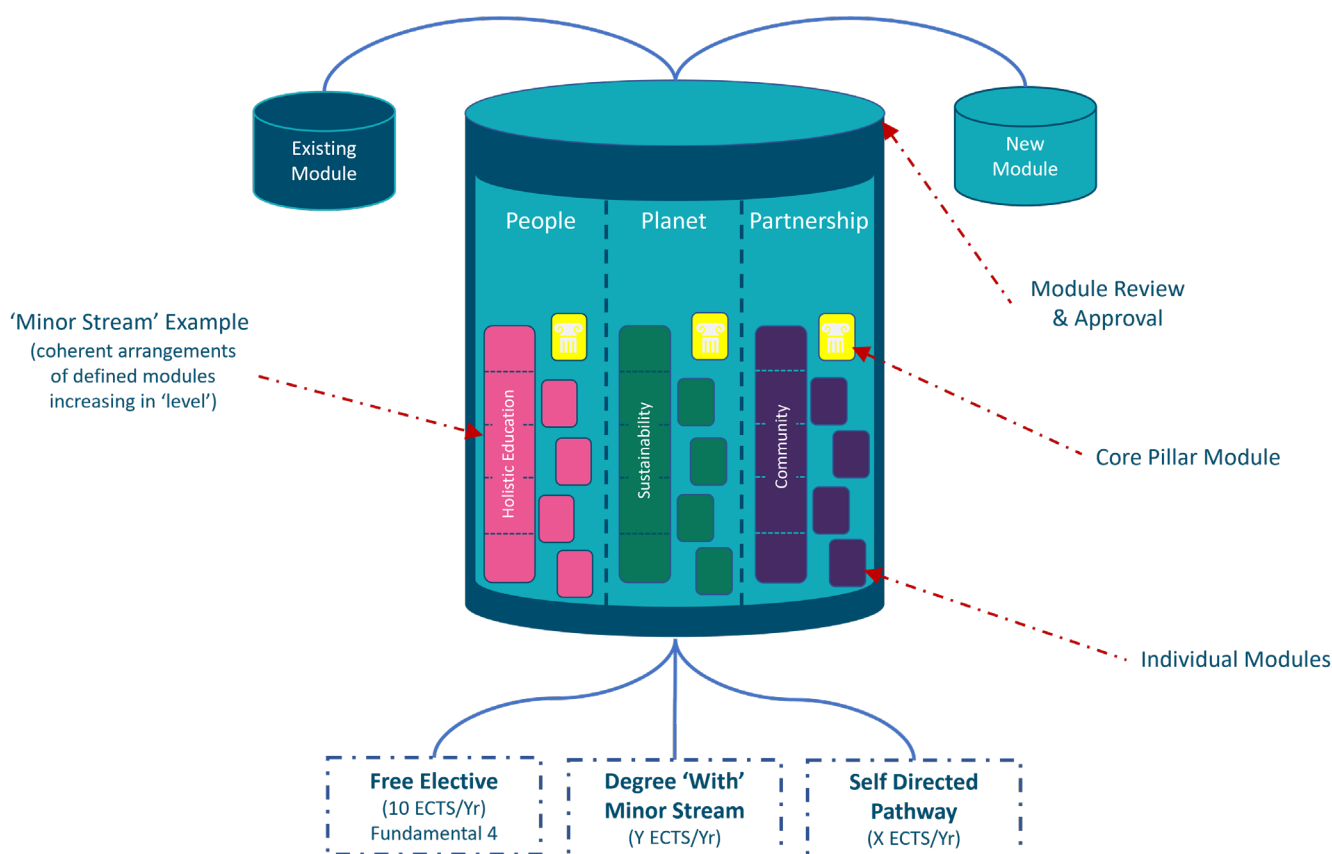


Figure 2: Schematic representation of the next stage of Pillar Module development, based on coherent arrangement of modules within a Pillar “Minor Stream” with the end qualification for the learner a Degree ‘with’ (or Minor Stream, nomenclature to be confirmed).

Recommendations

1. Approve the Principles of a Pillar Module.
2. Select a preferred approach to initial, and subsequently sustained, implementation (Options 1-3).
3. Integrate the resource implications of realising the Principles of a Pillar Module and the preferred implementation approach into the evolving RAM processes (*as based on the RAM Principles*).

Please Cite as:

University Education Model. (2023). Fundamental 6 Discussion Paper. TU Dublin.

APPENDIX

PILLAR 1 PEOPLE

Fostering individual and collective talents in an ever-changing world - we intend to ignite the imagination of students, staff and partners and support people to explore their abilities and reach their full potential.

Elements aligned to the People Pillar in particular from our strategic intent are the following:

- A dynamic new model of education producing the most sought-after **digitally-literate graduates**, will be embedded in the University, transforming the learning opportunities and experience for all
- We will be the most **'accessible'** university in Ireland, with the largest number of diverse learners
- We will be recognised as an **exemplar in equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)** where people are proud to be part of a connected community and their talents, aptitude and agility will create real impact on the global stage
- We will achieve and develop a body of **high calibre of staff** in line with International TUs, who are actively engaged in the University's shared purpose
- We will expand and celebrate our connected family of highly successful, internationally **sought-after graduates**

Exemplar modules*

- Exploring Your Potential: Unlocking the Power of Creativity and Innovation
 - Embracing Change: Building Resilience and Adaptability for Success
 - Cultivating Your Unique Gifts: Developing Your Individual and Collective Talents and Skills
 - The Future is Now: Preparing for a Dynamic and Evolving World
 - Unleashing Your Inner Leader: Discovering Your Strengths and Making a Difference in the World
- *for illustrative purposes**





PILLAR 2 PLANET

A Powerhouse for Living & Breathing Sustainability – we intend to address the challenges facing the world and impact positively on the planet and people, with ‘education’ as the engine.

Elements aligned to the Planet Pillar in particular from our strategic intent are the following:

- We will be a leader in **informing public debate** on sustainability, stimulating awareness and action
- We will be recognised for our **commitment to real action** on sustainability, reducing our carbon footprint and meeting global sustainability standards such as STARS ®
- A new generation of TU Dublin **graduates will be leading** the sustainability agenda with passion and purpose
- Our **research community** will be internationally recognised in 5 key research fields
- We will be known for the **creation of new knowledge** and the development of timely & practical solutions that address the SDGs

Exemplar modules*

- Sustainability in Action: Making a Positive Impact on the Planet and People
- The Power of Education: Leading the Way to a More Sustainable Future
- Building a Better World: Exploring Innovative Solutions to Global Challenges
- The Future is Green: Developing Skills and Strategies for Sustainable Living
- Transforming the World: Embracing Sustainability in Every Aspect of Life

***for illustrative purposes**



PILLAR 3 PARTNERSHIP

Delivering Shared Impact - we intend to develop the most connected university; cultivating a network of discoverers, creators and entrepreneurs; engaging with people that make things happen.

Elements aligned to the Partnership Pillar in particular from our strategic intent are the following:

- We will be a university of **open innovation** – supporting and growing our portfolio of creative & entrepreneurial endeavours
- Our vibrant **connected network** will be well established and known for delivering real solutions for the real world
- TU Dublin will be **recognised internationally** as a top performing technological university
- Our international activities and partnerships in key regions will have flourished and **international students** will represent at least 1/5 of the student population
- To be **financially sustainable** and agile in a changing landscape, so as to fund our strategic aims
- To be one of the most **flexible universities** in meeting the needs of stakeholders
- We will be an **agile, technology-enabled**, modern university, that facilitates learners in an advanced digital world

Exemplar modules*

- Connecting for Success: Building a Network of Discoverers, Creators, and Entrepreneurs
 - The Power of Collaboration: Working Together to Make an Impact
 - Engaging with the World: Making a Difference Through Your Work and Ideas
 - The Future is Now: Harnessing the Power of Innovation and Creativity
 - Delivering Shared Value: Creating Impact and Opportunity Through Partnerships and Connections
- *for illustrative purposes**