The Negotiated Award Pathway (Ultralab & UCANA)

Special Approval for a Cohort Path

for

BA Hons Learning, Technology and Research

Web Delivery at Chelmsford Campus

Including

Validation of New modules to be Delivered Online

<p style="text-align:center">Contents   Page number</p>

1. Basic Details

This award is at Undergraduate level. It offers a BA in Learning, Technology, and Research:

In the first instance, students will seek approval for a Certificate of Higher Education and then a Diploma in Higher Education as award outcomes on the route to a BA Hons.

The first cohort of students will begin study before the 31st July 2003. The number of students in the first cohort will be 500 - 550.

It is anticipated that there will be further cohorts the second of which will start to study in January 2004. Students targeted are those who are unable to attend university face-to-face and who might benefit from an alternative approach to learning and a particular emphasis on assessment.

Students will be full time but will be studying in their work place. After the first cohort there will be flexibility for students to join the programme at different points in the year through negotiation with a learning facilitator.

2. Introduction and Rationale

The principle aim of the BA Learning, Technology and Research is to provide access to higher education to people who are committed to their work. As part of a deliberate attempt to foster collaborative working within the programme students will subject their practice to self-examination, as well as the examination of peers. Students will learn the skills to improve their effectiveness in their particular work context and will develop the ability, and confidence to influence and improve practice within their work setting.

The programme will focus on 'understanding why and knowing how to ' and will develop individuals to become articulate, critically reflective problem solvers within their work context, in line with the APU aspirations.

In line with Ultralab's philosophy of making learning delightful, each student will be a member of a lively online learning community, where collaborative learning will be generated through participation using a range of learning processes and protocols including reflective dialogue with peers, and an integrated student-mentoring-student model.

Learning facilitators will take on the roles of tutor, co-learners, experts, coaches and/or mentors. They will provide the active facilitation of the online spaces as well as the individualised support of learners. The online learning community will play a significant role in providing affective / social support for all members by fostering social interaction.

Each student will individualise his/her course to suit their personal needs and aspirations within his/her work setting. The programme will augment the students' work so that work time contributes to the module requirements and studies enhance working practice. Students will negotiate their aims and objectives with their learning facilitator as a part of developing their Personal Development Plan (PDP).

The model of learning that underpins this programme is one of an autonomous, self-directed, critical, and reflective individual who seeks to learn collaboratively. This model emphasises the analysis of the values, and moral and ethical dilemmas surrounding work-place practice.

3. The partnership
The cohort will study a framework-negotiated programme in a partnership between Ultralab and UCANA. The pathway will be delivered fully online, making use of Ultralab's permanent, reliable, broadband link to the Internet.

Ultralab will use its expertise, in developing online programmes, that has been gained through 15 years in developing online communities for learning professionals of all ages. Since 2000 Ultralab, in partnership with the National College of School Leadership (NCSL), has enabled over 25,000 learning professionals to support their continual professional development. In 2001 Ultralab developed, designed and facilitated the

mandatory programme for future school leaders, the National Professional Qualification for Headship. Since this date over 12,000 candidates have taken part in this programme. Other recent programmes, which have online learning communities at their heart and in which Ultralab works in partnership with the NCSL include Leading from the Middle for middle managers in schools and the Bursar Development Programme. The success of the online project Notschool.net has enabled Ultralab to develop skills and expertise working with pupils aged 13 to 18 whom school does not fit. Ultralab will use many tried and tested ideas from this context to support students in Ultraversity.

Additionally Ultralab has a long track record of delivering programmes of MA modules both face-to-face and using online communities since 1994.

UCANA bring to this pathway their significant expertise in the area of negotiated awards and the development of Personal Development Plans for students.

4. Relationship with work organizations
It is anticipated that students will have the support of their work organization in undertaking this degree. Students will be encouraged to identify their personal workplace mentor with whom they feel comfortable and who can offer them the support and encouragement with their studies. Identification of a mentor is not a requirement for students.

General resources will be provided to support mentors in their role and a member of the learning facilitation team will take specific responsibility for updating the resources provided.

Learning facilitators will support students through the process of identifying a mentor, and may, in exceptional circumstances, mediate between organizations and the student to help resolve issues or difficulties.

5. Relevance to students' needs

Students may be in full or part time employment or in non-paid work, such as charity volunteers etc. The initial cohort will be where learning is an important focus and the modules are designed to have a generic relevance to the employment needs of both students and their organisations. Students will negotiate learning outcomes in the context of their work at the start of each module. The flexibility of this pathway is designed to meet the demands of a dynamic changing age of supercomplexity. This should ensure that the outcomes are relevant to students' needs and the needs of their organisations. The ASSET model of Core Assessment criteria (Winter1996) will inform the philosophy behind ensuring progression and relevance to students needs.

a. Negotiation

Throughout the programme, from induction and at regular intervals, students will negotiate learning contracts and individualised pathways with their learning facilitators. This will involve

- Negotiation of the learning contract, identifying how a student is to meet the requirements of modules and activities being undertaken (ongoing discussion with learning facilitator and peers in learning sets)
- Negotiation of contextualisation of a module – how a student's work setting is reflected in the module's content (at the start of each module)
- Negotiation of pathway – identifying modules that can be taken from the APU module catalogue to meet an individual student's needs (at least twice a year, with learning facilitator and, where relevant, with UCANA)

b. Exhibition

A fundamental part of the degree is the exhibition in year 3. This will take place in the students work context to enable them to share their learning with their colleagues and other interested groups. This 'celebration' of students work moves away from the 'traditional' dissertation that is read only be the student and their tutor to students making an impact on

their work context whatever this may be. The skills required to execute the exhibition will enable students to fully demonstrate the Level 3 graduate skills such as:

- Self-reliance
- People and Interpersonal skills
- Oral Skills
- Customer Orientation
- Problem solving
- Self-application
- Managing information in a range of media

6. Pathway aims for the learner - progression

As students progress through the award, they negotiate activities, review new areas of their professional context, and identify their pathway for development. This progression may relate to employment-based competency models or build on work done for earlier modules and will be reflected in the generic criteria for levels.

Aims:
- To develop a personal philosophy of learning, the use of technology and research which relates to their own work setting
- To acquire the ability to analyse and synthesise knowledge of practice so as to solve practical problems and situations
- To maintain a flexible approach to change as a participant, and awareness of their own power to influence change
- To appreciate the enriching nature of working collaboratively in communities of enquiry that share insights and perspectives
- To develop a continuing concern for their own professional development and the appropriate strategies to achieve this

- To provide an appropriate foundation in professional and technical understanding, and knowledge and skills on which they can build through continuous professional development
- To develop the skills of action enquiry as an enduring capacity for lifelong learning and improvement in the workplace
- Develop the capacity to communicate to a wider audience

7. Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of the programme successful students will have acquired the experience, knowledge and confidence to:
- undertake effective self-managed study up to undergraduate level 3;
- effectively use appropriate technologies including the Internet and associated web technologies;
- plan and implement workplace action enquiry;
- analyse and evaluate their own learning;
- work collaboratively with their peers in a supportive environment;
- develop their own mentoring skills to enable them to mentor others;
- develop action plans;
- develop evidence based practice;
- become a reflective practitioner;
- communicate effectively with stakeholders in their work settings;
- develop, plan and implement projects;
- gain knowledge and skills in their chosen discipline.

QAA benchmark statements will apply, initially these will be Education Studies benchmarks modified to reflect the work context of the student as they progress through the pathway.

8. Structure and content of the programme

Year 1 is a generic pathway, with students negotiating an area of study with their learning facilitator to be agreed by Awards and Approval Committee.   In year 2, students will have the benefit of already researching their work context and this will inform the negotiations of their pathway reflecting QAA benchmark statements and their work context.

If students change or lose their work context, they will be supported in negotiating a pathway relevant to their new situation possibly but not necessarily within this pathway.

Year 1 (120 credits) - This year contains 6 modules:
1. Module C1: Induction/online community (20 credits) week 1 - 45
2. Module W1: Investigating the work setting (20 credits) week 1 - 15
3. Module X1: Introduction to online communication and technology (20 credits) week 1 - 15
4. Module W2: Reflection in the work setting 1 (20 credits) week 16 - 30
5. Module X2: Understanding action enquiry (20 credits) week 16 - 30
6. Module W3: Learning in the work setting 1 (20 credits) week 31 - 45

All modules carry equal weight (20 credits). Module C1 will last throughout the 45 weeks of the programme allowing the student review points, plan for year 2 themes, and negotiate.

Year 2 (120 credits) This year contains 4 core modules and two optional modules:
1. Module C2: Community based support and planning (20 credits) week 1 - 45
2. Module W4: Learning in the work setting 2 (20 credits) week 1 - 15
3. Module W5: Action enquiry (20 credits) week 16 - 30
4. Module W6: Reflection in the work setting 2 (20 credits) week 31 - 45

Negotiated options - choice of two:
1. Module Z1: Designing technology for learning (20 credits)

2. Module Z2: Making technology based resources (20 credits)
3. Module Z3: Independent Learning Module 1 (ILM) (20 credits)
4. Module Z4: Independent Learning Module 2 (ILM) (20 credits)
5. or other negotiated module (20 credits)

All modules carry equal weight (20 credits) Module C2 will last throughout the 45 weeks of the programme allowing the student to review progress and to plan for year 3 themes.

Year 3 (120 credits) - This year contains 3 modules:
1. Module X3: Towards an exhibition (40 credits) week 1 - 15
2. Module W7: Exhibition (40 credits) week 16 - 30
3. Module X4: Validation and Defence (30 credits) week 31 – 45
4. Module UNH1 995: Graduate skills for personal development and employment (10 credits) week 31 - 45

Table 1 Degree Structure

Year 1 - Certificate of Higher Education

Semesters			Online community based student support programme from which: - journal is drawn - APL/APEL - Careers - Profile - award negotiation
	C 1 Induction / Online Community [20]		
S 1	**W1 Investigating the Work Setting [20]**	**X 1 Introduction to Online Communication & Technology [20]**	
	Review- Profile / Proposal / Planning		
S 2	**W2 Reflection in the Work Setting 1 [20]**	**X 2 Understanding Action Enquiry [20]**	
S 3	**W3 Learning in the Work Setting 1 [20]**		
	Review- Profile / Proposal / Planning		

Year 2 - Diploma in Higher Education

Semesters			
	C 2 Community Based Support and Planning [20]		
S 1	**W4 Learning in the Work Setting 2 [20]**	**Negotiated option [20]**	For example:ILM/Designing Technology for Learning/Making Technology Based Resources
	Review- Profile / Proposal / Planning/Mentoring		
S 2	**W5 Action Enquiry [20]**	**Negotiated option [20]**	For example: ILM/Designing Technology for Learning/Making Technology Based Resources
S 3	**W6 Reflection in the Work Setting 2 [20]**		
	Review- Profile / Proposal / Planning/Mentoring		

Year 3 - Degree

Semesters			Community based student support programme/col laborative working
S 1	**X3 Towards Exhibition [40]**		
	Review - Profile / Proposal / Planning		
S 2	**W7 Exhibition Preparation and Presentation [40]**		
S 3	**X4 Exhibition validation & defence [30]**	**UNH1 995 Grad. skills for pers. dev. & employment [10]**	
	Review - Profile / Proposal / Planning		

9. Assessment

The philosophy of assessment is that each student, at each module end, will produce a report, in any suitable/appropriate format, that both demonstrates achievement of the learning outcomes and adds value to the student's organisation. Suitable/appropriate formats may include, but not be limited to, traditional text based reports, a short piece of video reporting, audio reporting or any combination thereof or use of other media and technology as appropriate.

The full suite of assessment criteria (see following tables pp 11-13) will not be assessed in each module, although in any given trimester intended learning outcomes would enable the full range of criteria to be met. Marking of student work will take account of student progression throughout to ensure that they levels are appropriately and fairly applied.

Details of the assessment of each module are given on the module definition forms.

Marking of work that counts towards the assessment of the modules will be fine graded within the following bands of achievement:

Excellent (70% - 100%)

Very good (60% - 69%)

Good (50% - 59%)

Pass (40% - 49%)

Fail (39% - 0%)

Table 2 Level 1 assessment criteria

Criteria	Excellent	Very good	Good	Pass	Fail
Understand the task and meet the learning objectives.	Negotiates tasks set, identifies and meets own learning objectives.	Completes the tasks set and meets all of the learning objectives.	Understands most of tasks set and meets most of the learning objectives.	With support, addresses most of the tasks set. Meets the learning outcomes in a limited way.	Barely or fails to address the tasks or meet the learning outcomes.
Ability to express ideas and provide a coherent and structured discussion.	Demonstrates understanding of a variety of emerging ideas. Synthesises ideas to provide clear and logical explanation in discussions.	Presents ideas in a clear and concise manner and shows some evidence of synthesis and explanation of ideas in discussions.	Presents ideas clearly, but without synthesis. Discusses ideas but does not develop them.	Presents ideas in a partial and fragmentary way. Discusses ideas in a limited way.	Does not distinguish between facts and opinions/ideas. Shows little coherence in discussions.
Understand the theoretical background of chosen area of study.	Synthesizes a range of literature. Describes how use of theory could improve practice.	Begins to connect theory and practice.	Shows good understanding of individual theories/ideas/ models from the literature.	Accesses the literature but shows limited understanding of theory.	Has difficulty accessing the literature. Shows little or no understanding of theory.
Demonstrate the development of analytical skills.	Demonstrates thorough analysis of issues independently.	Demonstrates analytical skills independently.	Demonstrates some analytical skills in less structured activities with reduced questioning from learning facilitators.	Demonstrates some analytical skills in highly structured activities and with questioning from learning facilitator. Able to classify.	Little evidence of analytical skills demonstrated. Little demonstration of ability to classify
Assess their individual strengths and weaknesses	Identifies their own strengths and weaknesses independently.	Identifies their own strengths and weaknesses with limited support.	Demonstrates some understanding of own strengths and weaknesses, with learning facilitator support.	Has an awareness of own strengths and weaknesses.	Shows limited awareness that individuals possess both strengths and weaknesses.
Demonstrates understanding of use of technology and a range of media.	Identifies appropriate use of technology/media appropriate for the message and audience.	Begins to demonstrate appropriate choice of technology/media for a specific message and audience	Independently uses appropriate technology and other resources. Uses a range of media	Identifies use of appropriate technologies with support from learning facilitator. Uses two media	Is not selective in use of technology and other resources. Uses one media
Communication with others.	Communicates effectively giving relevant information in a clear and concise manner. Independently offers support to others engaging in extended conversations.	Offers support to others and begins to engage in conversation around issues.	Gives information clearly and appropriately. Provides some support for others when specifically requested.	Gives information given indiscriminately Supports others infrequently.	Communicates in an unclear way takes support from, but rarely offers support to, others.

Table 3 Level 2 assessment criteria

Criteria	Excellent	Very good	Good	Pass	Fail
Select and negotiate appropriate tasks. Meet learning objectives.	Negotiates tasks, devises own tasks, identifies and meets own learning objectives.	Develops aspects of the tasks set following negotiation meets all of the learning objectives.	Understands all of the tasks set and meets most of the learning outcomes. Limited negotiation.	With support, addresses most of the tasks set. Meets the learning outcomes in a limited way.	Barely or fails to address the tasks or meet the learning outcomes.
Ability to take responsibility for their own learning.	Takes full responsibility for their own learning following negotiation.	Takes responsibility for their own learning, with some direction.	Takes limited responsibility for own learning if supported by learning facilitator.	Infrequently takes responsibility for own learning. depends on others for support and direction.	Learning is directed by others.
Ability to relate theory to practice.	Demonstrates the ability to relate theory and practice and show the relationship between the two. Increasingly demonstrates a critical approach to literature.	Understands there is a relationship between theory and practice. Demonstrate relationship in a limited way.	Connects theory and practice in a limited way. Uncritical acceptance of literature unless supported by learning facilitator.	Connects theory and practice with support from learning facilitator. Uncritical acceptance of the literature.	Does not connect theory and practice. Sees literature as descriptive.
Evidence of developing analytical skills.	Analyses a range of information independently; compares and contrasts ideas.	Analyses a range of information with minimum guidance begins to compare and contrast ideas independently	develops analytical framework with limited learning facilitator support. Can compare and contrast ideas if framework is provided	Develops analytical framework in a limited way and only with learning facilitator support. Does not compare and contrast ideas	no analytical skills yet evident
Reflect on individual strengths and weaknesses	Reflects critically on own strengths and weaknesses and understands how these impact on others.	Understands own strengths and weaknesses and how these might relate to working with others.	With learning facilitator support, develops techniques to overcome weaknesses and build on strengths.	Begins to develop strategies to develop/overcome these, with learning facilitator support.	Shows limited awareness of how to develop individual strengths and build on weaknesses.
Using appropriate techniques to communicate.	Communicates effectively using language appropriate to context. Regularly offers considered support to others.	Uses appropriate language to communicate with peers and learning facilitators. Occasionally offers support.	Generally uses appropriate formats in communication with peers and learning facilitators. Rarely offers support.	Communicates with peers with and learning facilitators with limited use of appropriate techniques. Requests rather than offers support	Shows limited effective communication with peers and learning facilitators.

Table 4 Level 3 assessment criteria

Criteria	Excellent	Very good	Good	Pass	Fail
Meeting the learning objectives.	Develops own learning objectives and meets them, offering substantial supporting evidence which is relevant and focused.	Meets all of the learning objectives offering relevant and convincing supporting evidence.	Understands the learning outcomes and offers good supportive evidence offering the potential for further development.	Meets the learning outcomes with supportive evidence of a satisfactory nature.	Barely or fails to meet the learning objectives.
Evidence of problem solving skills.	Demonstrates and evidences a full range of problem solving skills. High order thinking skills are evident.	Demonstrates and evidences some problem solving skills. Demonstrates sound thinking skills.	Demonstrates some problem solving skills. Thinking skills are often more descriptive than analytical.	Demonstrates limited problem solving skills	Does not evidence problem solving skills. Full understanding is not demonstrated.
Understanding of appropriate theory and its relationship to practice.	Demonstrates excellent critical awareness in relating theoretical and practical components of their work context Demonstrates wide knowledge the of literature	Demonstrates good critical awareness in relating theoretical and practical components of their work context. Demonstrates good knowledge of the literature.	Demonstrates some critical awareness in relating theoretical and practical components of their work context Demonstrates some knowledge of the literature.	Demonstrates limited critical awareness and does not always relate theoretical and practical components of their work context. Demonstrates limited knowledge of the literature.	Demonstrates no critical awareness and finds it hard to relate theoretical and practical components of their work context Demonstrates little knowledge of the literature
Analyses and evaluates working in a critically constructive and reflective manner.	Demonstrates critical construction, and profound reflection.	Frequently challenges positions and usually shows deep reflective skills.	Sometimes challenges positions, and sometimes shows deep reflective skills.	Understands that there are a range of positions and demonstrates shallow reflective skills.	Rarely modifies position and shows limited and poor reflection.
Evidence of innovation within tasks.	Presents new ideas within tasks and offers them for criticism and reflection. Demonstrates new understanding.	Presents some new ideas with clear explanation linked to tasks.	Understands all tasks set. Offers few new ideas or insights	Understands most tasks set. Presents ideas are presented in a systematic way with little new insight offered.	Fails to engage in tasks or offer new insights or understandings.
Consideration of audiences needs and can deliver in an articulate and effective manner with peers and stakeholders using appropriate media.	Engages in and leads discussions. Offers ideas for discussion and critical debate. Uses a wide range of media in an effective way to communicate to a variety of audiences.	Develops ideas through discussion and offers ideas for debate. Uses a range of media to clearly communicate with a range of audiences.	Engages in discussion but offers few ideas. Uses different media to communicate with a limited audience.	Engages in discussion to a limited extent and communication is information seeking or giving. Uses predominantly one media to communicate with a restricted audience.	Fails to engage in discussion. Does not use a variety of, or appropriate media and fails to communicate with a variety of audiences.
Autonomous and self managed learning.	Demonstrates independent thinking and works in a self-managed way.	Develops independent thinking and sometimes works in a self-managed way.	Shows limited autonomy and works within defined guidelines. Rarely works in a self managed way.	Manages their own work and builds on the ideas of others, with some initial support.	Needs strong support and relies heavily on the ideas of others.

10. Entry requirements and admissions procedures

The students for this pathway will be in a full or part time, paid or unpaid work setting. The pathway is intended for students who wish to progress in their work setting and/or gain greater understanding of their work setting. In particular:

- students are admitted to the pathway on the basis of a judgement that they are able to benefit from the study involved;
- students are admitted to the pathway on the basis of a judgement that they are capable of succeeding in obtaining as a minimum the Certificate of Higher Education;
- various forms of evidence are used in making these judgements, including current and previous experience;
- active steps are taken to ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants.

In considering applications evidence is sought of personal, professional and educational experiences, as appropriate, to provide indications of an applicant's ability to:
- meet the demands of the programme;
- benefit from the programme.

An admission requirement for students enrolling on this programme is a direct link to the Internet with the facility to download, store, and upload files. Students studying in this programme will need to have basic proficiency in ICT or willingness to learn basic ICT skills. This will be tested by the requirement of students to complete an online registration form and receive, and respond to, an email sent to an email address specified as a requirement on the registration form.

a. Induction

The first trimester's modules provide for the student, with the learning facilitator, to have space and time to become familiar with the pedagogical approach. This is done through

guided activities, based around the personal development plan and through the use of the online communities used as the medium for the pathway.

b. APL and APEL

Students may be admitted with Credit on the basis of prior certificated learning and/or assessed experiential learning.

Students making a claim for admission with credit will be advised by learning facilitators to contact the relevant Field Leader (or nominee) who will guide them through the UCANA's procedures for admission with credit. In order to prevent prior learning being added to programmes at a later, claims for admission with credit for prior certificated learning will be identified through the electronic portfolio and be made within five weeks of the start of the student's first registration.

Marks or grades from prior certificated learning are not transferable to this pathway.

Students making a claim for admission with credit in respect of uncertificated / experiential learning will be required to produce an electronic portfolio (or equivalent) for assessment and approval by the Accreditation and Approvals Committee. This process will be undertaken by the student through the completion of an AP(E)L module.

11. Quality enhancement and staff development

a. Learning Facilitator expertise

Learning facilitators need to be widely experienced in both the theory and practice of online community learning. The Ultralab APU staff proposed for this pathway all have considerable expertise in online communication and in designing and delivering programmes for professional development via the web. The domains of expertise include online pedagogy, group social relationships, management and administration, and information architecture. They all have a background in education and many have held

senior leadership positions in schools. A number have been involved in delivering and assessing MA modules at APU as well as NCSL and NPQH programmes.

As well as learning facilitators, 'experts' will work with communities and students bringing with them specific expertise in domains relevant to the students needs.

It is recognised that there will need to be staff development for those involved in this pathway and there will be an online support community for staff. Within this community appropriately qualified mentors will offer help, advice and support for learning facilitators and 'experts' who are working in the communities.

Ultralab have developed a mentoring programme which is currently being undertaken by a cohort of 25 full time senior learning professionals. This mentoring programme will be available to learning facilitators.

b. Learning Facilitator Development

Learning facilitators working with future cohorts will need to possess or develop the skills outlined above. If they do not have prior experience of online community learning they will be required to take a course, for example the OLTAF Online Tutoring and Facilitation module offered by Ultralab as part of the IMICS scheme in the MA in Education. In addition, new Learning Facilitators will be 'coached' by experienced colleagues to ensure that quality standards are maintained.

c. Experts

As well as learning facilitators, 'experts' will work with communities and students bringing with them specific expertise in domains relevant to the students needs. Experts will not be required to possess the skill set of Learning facilitators who will support them in their specific role.

d. Ongoing support

It is recognised that there will need to be staff development for those involved in this pathway and there will be an online support community for staff. Within this community appropriately qualified mentors will offer help, advice and support for learning facilitators and 'experts' who are working in the communities.

Ultralab have developed a mentoring programme which is currently being undertaken by a cohort of 25 full time senior learning professionals. This mentoring programme will be available to learning facilitators.

12. Costing

The costing for this programme has included for technical support, development of online materials, a continuing iterative process of software development as the programme progresses, hardware for learning facilitators, support, and equipment serving web based content.

13. Student Experience

a. Community support

The programme will be delivered via an online asynchronous community. Students will develop their online learning skills via an induction process, support from the help line, and support in online learning communities. There is a core module, Introduction to Online Communication & Technology, focussing on learning technology to equip students with the skills they will need to learn online. The diagram (over page) indicates the structure of the learning communities and shows where support will be available.

Table 5 Community structure
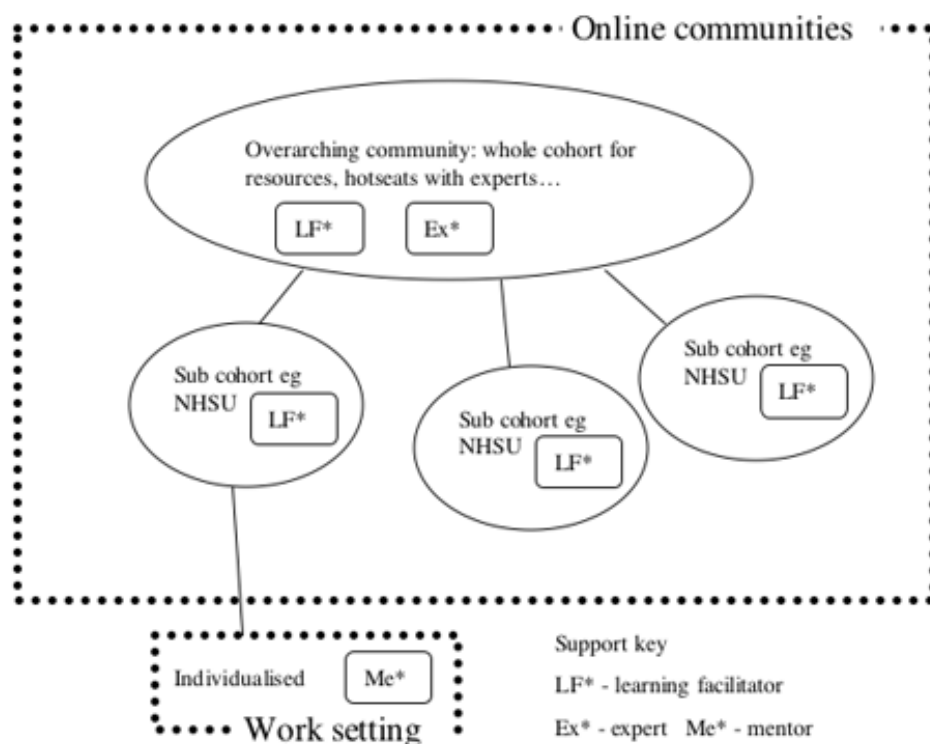
b. Student support

Guidance and academic support for students will be provided via:

- initial profiling of the students to identify their strengths and weaknesses;
- named personal learning facilitator;
- peer support in the online community including mentoring;
- access to experts through the use of asynchronous software within an online community;
- thrice yearly individual review process with their learning facilitator;
- technical support via telephone.

Learning facilitators will provide support to students in realising their full potential and hold individual (three times a year) reviews for proposal and planning. At the start of year one Learning Facilitators will provide highly structured learning experiences, moving gradually to become less structured and placing increasing emphasis on self-direction. The particular nature of support required will be informed by the initial profiling and may

identify particular needs that will require strategies to help students back into the 'learning habit'. Resources will be produced to support these needs, and to develop study skills required to follow the pathway while students remain in their work context. The learners will continue to be guided throughout years two and three.

Contact time will be measured through scheduled tutorials, and participation in the online community, telephone and Short Messaging Service (SMS). Participation in and contribution to the online communities will be transparent and open for all to see.

Students will have ongoing contact with other students via the online community that is at the heart of conversations, discussions and dialogue between students. The online community will provide shared and individual feedback. There will be both structured and open conversations to allow for both formal and non-formal learning to take place.

Students will be assessed via assessment portfolios for modules of work throughout the three years of study. The portfolio will contain work unique to the context for every student. The indicative outline of each student's negotiated award will reside online and will be a 'living document', which students will adapt as the theme and detail of their study is honed. Access to students' work will be protected, since access to the online components, including the community, will require individual user ID and passwords. Recorded milestones of students work will ensure a progression through the levels can be tracked.

This pathway intends to present the students' marks for moderation at the end of each trimester using a SAP (set assessment panel). The outcome of the SAPs will form a basis for the learning facilitator to review with the student their credit achievements as part of module 1, which provides an induction, review and planning process which last throughout the 45 weeks of year 1.

The QA process will be assured by the learning facilitators' review process, which has a minimum of thrice yearly review meetings. Additionally there is likely to be daily contact

between the learning facilitators in the online community. After each SAP an anonymised summary report covering key issues arising from the SAP will be posted to the appropriate on-line community conference area. This summary will specifically address issues of continuing pathway development and similar matters in an accessible and constructive way for students.

There will be a commitment to make learning delightful, seductive and fun! The programme will exploit all appropriate technologies and implement new technologies as they are developed. Experienced learning facilitators will translate successful face-to-face strategies for online application where appropriate.

There will be ongoing community feedback mechanism provided for students and an optional employers questionnaire.

14. Illustrative Case Studies of Typical Potential Students

a. Student A

Student A is an ICT technician who is currently employed at a secondary school She hears about the degree from her head teacher who encourages her to fill in an online expression of interest form for Ultraversity. In doing so Student A is expected to write a profile of her current employment. Student A states that she wishes to gain more understanding of the relationship between technology infrastructure and learning.   This is her second position in ICT, both have been in schools. Student A is 26 years old and has some formal qualifications from school, but as an ICT expert chose to stay on a work at her schools as ICT technician rather than apply for university entrance. She receives a response email to her email address. This process checks the email. The online form checks this student has the ability to fill in forms via an internet connection.

Following her online expression of interest Student A fills in an online registration form which confirms her ability to download and upload documents. Her registration is accepted and she begins the admission process.

Student A receives details of her individual ID and password which enables her to log into her cohort community space, where she finds a welcome from her learning facilitator requesting her to respond to the message. Student A responds to this contact and accesses the community space the following evening, when she logs in to find a proposed time and date for a telephone profile interview. This telephone interview takes place and uses the profile filled in on registration as a starting point. The learning facilitator uses the online profile notes during the session to add details discussed. Both Student A and the learning facilitator can see the profile on the web browser and both can annotate it. The learning facilitator introduces Student A to the online area for the cohort work group containing the module resources, previous cohorts' discussions, activities and tasks, the student's own web space, the concept and purpose of mile stoning their work in the electronic portfolio. Student A agrees to continue working in the web space and begins to consider her online journal.

Two days later at work Student A logs into the community space, finds her cohort workgroup and finds tasks on online communication. She looks at a number of recommended web based resources, watches a piece of video on online communities and reads some questions asked by other students of an expert in online communications. Student A has a question which she wishes to be answered so she posts this question in the online community. The next day when Student A logs into the online community she finds her question answered by the expert and that another student in a similar work context has added her comments. Student A sends a message to this student to establish a communication. In the same session Student A navigates to her online space and adds thoughts in her online journal and comments on some resources she has found useful. She also finds some information in the cohort space on using the online library and access to other UK libraries, which she reads. She notes that on the next evening there is to be a synchronous chat for her cohort students on access to library resources. Student A cannot

make this session due to a family commitment, but is relieved to find that the transcript of the session will be available for all students and can be annotated retrospectively.

Through establishing a pattern of logging in twice a week from work and on Sunday mornings when her children are at football practice Student A is able to join in the discussions set in her cohort work space, upload work to her web space, view and comment on other students' work and maintain a regular contact with her team of three cohort learning facilitators and her own personal learning facilitator. At her end of semester review, Student A is on course to reach the sixty credits required and in her individual telephone discussion with her named learning facilitator her electronic portfolio and learning space journal demonstrate her achievements to date. This pattern continues for Student A through year 1.

By year two it is apparent that Student A is a suitable candidate to mentor new students and she does this in the online learning community offering advice and support by answering other students' questions. Critically reflecting on this experience and lessons learnt in her journal, she gains credit for these activities.

Student A works in the cohort workplace community to establish an area for her action enquiries and is interested in discussing this online with her peer group who are also working in a similar work setting. One of the cohort facilitators suggests an audio conference to allow the group to share their understandings and enable them to test their ideas. Student A joins this discussion and finds the experience useful, if formal. Some of Students A's action enquiry outcomes are surprising to her, but she finds others within the cohort whose work is leading them to similar conclusions. They share their findings with other members of the cohort work group. Student A records her thoughts and developing ideas in her online journal.

During the year Student A visits two members of another cohort who are conveniently located. Using simple digital cameras they exchange different approaches to a common

problem and share these with their cohort in the online community. Student A's head teacher welcomes this interchange and the fresh ideas it brings into the school.

In year 3 Student A begins her preparation for her exhibition. Her named learning facilitator initiates a telephone interview to ensure that she understands what is required and to help her plan the final year. Student A navigates to the cohort work group discussions and finds an alumni who offers help and advice on preparation and exhibition work. Student A spends some time looking at the examples of previous years' exhibition work exhibited online and reading other students accounts and previous cohorts' discussions. She begins a negotiation process with those in her work setting as this is where she intends to hold her exhibition during a week which coincides with both parents evenings and new intake open day; she has identified colleagues, parents and children as part of the key audience for her findings. She designs the validation exercise after discussion online with the cohort learning facilitators. By Easter student A has her exhibition in place and is delighted to find that some of her cohort have planned to attend. This is the first time she has met some of this now familiar group face to face. Student A records the exhibition, along with the other tasks required in this year, in her electronic portfolio. Her peers in the online community question her on her exhibited work and those who visited add their experiences and understandings gained. Student A uses the comments of those attending her exhibition to refine her defence and her exhibition.

b. Student B

Student B has been carer for three children under 10. He has recently gained part time employment in a primary school as a reading assistant following the last child reaching school age. Student B is 32 and has no formal qualifications.

Student B reads about the Ultraversity degree at his local library and fills in the online registration form from the computer in the library with the help of a friend. Student B states in the profile form that he wants to gain more understanding of how children learn in preparation for his children's developing learning experiences. Student B has no computer, email address or experience of ICT at this stage. He puts his friends email address in the

email contact field and his mobile phone number and states in his preferred communication field that he is inveterate texter. Student B's friend receives an email and student B himself receives a SMS to inform him of the sending of the email and asking him to respond via SMS, Student B is given a printout of the email by his friend later that day. The email explains that he will require a computer and internet connection to begin the programme but if he undertakes to get this connection by a given date then he may register for the programme. Student B sends an SMS to establish his agreement to get a computer and receives a return SMS to establish a time and date for a telephone conversation the following day with technical support. His attention is drawn to some discount and loan schemes.

Student B receives this call from technical support at the appointed time and a discussion takes place concerning the equipment required and the nature and possible costs of the connection. Student B is comforted to find that the simple camera, audio and SMS on his phone can all be useful throughout the degree to record his ideas and thoughts in his electronic journal and for placing sound and images into the cohort work group space to annotate and contribute to debate.

Student B registers in a local internet cafe, Whilst the registration is accepted the form sends a warning note to technical support that this student cannot upload and download data. A cross checking shows that technical support has had contact with Student B. Student B has his registration accepted and admission begins.

Two days later technical support sends an SMS to Student B to ask if he has started to investigate equipment. Student B responds with a date when he intends to look at equipment. He is asked by SMS to confirm when he has equipment and connection in place and the telephone number of the help line is sent via SMS to him.

10 days later Student B has his equipment but his internet connection is not established and he has no email address. Student B visits his local internet cafe after phoning the help line and getting the URL of the Ultraversity home page. After a few check questions the help

line also SMS his ID and password to his mobile. Student B logs into the online community at the internet cafe and is surprised to see a message from a learning facilitator and some of his cohort. He sees the first task is to post some information about his setting and is relieved to find that he can do this from the internet cafe. Student B finds a message from his learning facilitator who introduces himself, explains that he is Student B's main contact and suggests a time to contact him. Student B is surprised to find that his learning facilitator is aware that he has no connection and suggests they arrange the appointment date and time via SMS.

Two days later student B receives a telephone call from his learning facilitator who, using the online profile as a starting point, picks up an number of potential issues for Student B, including the lack of internet connection and formal qualifications. His learning facilitator informs Student B of the student support community and the areas and programme for those who have been out of studying for a period of time. Student B is reassured to find that there are a number of other students who have no formal qualifications and that there are a series of experts and two learning facilitators who are there to offer support and help to these students if this is needed.   The need for regular connection to the online community is established at this meeting and Student B agrees to continue to connect to the community via the internet cafe until his connection is established.

When his connection is sorted out Student B's friend visits and helps him establish the connection to the internet. However student B cannot connect to the online community. He telephones the help line who offer a number of suggestions, including checking that he has the correct ID and password. None of these are successful and so the help line starts an escalation process. This initiates messages to technical support who SMS Student B and arrange a telephone support session. This takes place the following day. Technical support quickly establish that the ISP used is not one of those who block some URLs, which can sometimes occur. In this case it is another simple problem and Student B is relieved to find that after 15 minutes a reliable connection is established.

Student B quickly navigates to the online community and finds the student learning support area. He reads his online portfolio so that he can check the comments his learning facilitator made. He thinks one of the comments is not correct so adds his own comments and expands some points. He cannot find his own web space so leaves a note for his learning facilitator, nor can he find his where he is expected to keep his electronic journal. He leaves a 'help' message in the support community. When Student B logs into the online community the next day he is surprised to see several messages from other students offering best wishes and a message from a year 2 student offering to help him through the early stages and giving a profile of herself with an honest account of her achievements and struggles in year 1. Student B accepts this offer and a mentoring relationship is established.

Student B approaches the first task with some nervousness. He notices that some other students are expressing concern about the requirements in the online community. The cohort learning facilitator directs the work group students to the work of previous students and Student B is relieved to see that he can post his task using a variety of media.

Student B receives a personal message from his learning facilitator, who is concerned that he may have forgotten to post in his electronic journal as it is still empty. He asks Student B to ensure he keeps a regular record and points out that he can keep images, video, text and audio files in his journal.

Student B is concerned that he will never remember to do everything he is supposed to and will never fit it all in with caring from a house and children. He contacts his mentor for support who shares a number of strategies she used to help her get started and points him to last year's discussion on this very issue. Student B decides to develop a programme for himself to enable him to fit in all the demands.

By six months Student B has established a pattern of work and connection. He is still struggling in some aspects of the work but is using the support area and has developed a small group with whom he is comfortable working and exchanging. He posts in the cohort

working group when required and has established a good relationship with his learning facilitator and mentor. At the six month review Student B is making process.

c. Student C

Student C is an experienced trainer with 15 years working in the IT sector.   He made a career move 5 years ago and started working in a school and is looking at ways of getting recognition for the experience he has gained over the past 20 years as well as developing his understanding of the use of ICT in education.

After Student C registered an interest, the learning facilitator picked up the fact that the way forward for Student C may be through an APEL process to gain credit for his prior learning in combination with taking additional modules.

As a part of the initial profiling phone conversation, student C asked about the possibilities of gaining credit for his past work experience. The learning facilitator explained how the APEL process works in general terms, and made the point that this was not an easy option and would require the prior experience to be matched with a current module on offer or perhaps the use of an Individual Learning Module. In any case, it would be difficult to undertake the degree if APEL counted for more than 1/3 of the first two years. The actual detail would require Student C to work with the APEL advisor and if that was the path Student C wished to pursue the learning facilitator could arrange for the process to be started.

15. Resources

Where appropriate, existing APU services and facilities will be available to Ultraversity students, as they are to all APU students. The students will have access to APU online library services, access to a UK Libraries plus card from the APU Library. Learning facilitators will support students in accessing APU provision, providing contact numbers. Pastoral support from APU will be accessed through the telephone. Many students will also have access to their work context support mechanisms.

There will be a different pattern of student support required because of the distance nature of the delivery of the degree and the work contexts of the students. The programme will run a support desk and programme specific technical support. Learning facilitators will also help provided ICT support required for the programme. The programme will be delivered using unique learning community software that encourages ease of communication and allows for shared and private areas in which to gather and create multimedia resources and references.

16. Programme and pathway operational management and evaluation

a. Initial Staffing

12 learning facilitators, 2 resource developers, 2 technical support personnel and a help desk for technical enquiries will staff the programme for the initial cohort, of 500 . Experts and guests will frequently be available online to provide specific expertise. The programme costing has provided for 3 full days of expertise per week for 30 teaching weeks. For the initial cohorts, all learning facilitators will have extensive experience of teaching and working in an online environment.

It is anticipated that becoming a guest or expert for a period of time on this programme, alongside some structured study in facilitation and mentoring online, would enable skills to develop amongst a group of individuals who could be learning facilitators for future cohorts.

b. Organisation and Management

The first cohort will be split into work groups dependent on themes identified. Facilitators will work in teams of 3-4, sharing the facilitation of the online communities formed from the work groups.

Each module will have a module leader, to take responsibility for coordination across the work groups, including moderation of assessment.

Overall responsibility will rest with a project leader who will coordinate the pathway and be the point of contact UCANA and the rest of the University, sharing tasks as appropriate with Ultralab staff.

In addition, the teaching team is supported by two learning material technicians who develop audio and video and multimedia materials. Some specialist technical modules will be prepared by specialist team members. There will be 'visiting' lecturer team members who are experts in particular field, invited as guests to online discussions and hotseats.

The whole learning community team will facilitate the learning and assessment process for each of the learning communities.

c. Pathway Organisation

The pathway modules will be allocated to the generic UCANA set.

The programme leader/s will oversee the pathway including:
- induction;
- programme development;
- student admissions procedures;
- staff training and development;
- student experience;
- appeals procedure;
- programme budget;
- assessment procedures and processes;
- learning and assessment;
- development of resources for students and learning facilitators;
- co-ordination of moderation;
- quality assurance and evaluation processes.

d. Student appeals procedure

The lead learning facilitation team will provide access for students to an appeals process in line with APU procedures. These procedures will also provide for support of students who, for whatever reason, wish to deal with someone other than their named learning facilitator.

e. Quality Assurance and Evaluation

As a part of the QA process, an evaluation will be carried out by online student survey at the end of each trimester. There is also an element of continuous evaluation in the on-line communities/conferences. There will be an area of FAQs, which will address on-going areas of concern and other repetitive queries. The evaluation will cover standard APU questions and additional more specific course related areas determined by the programme team. These forms will formally be monitored and the responses included to form part of the post-SAP report posted to the community.

Cohort work groups collate comments on delivery of each module, identifying strengths and weaknesses and making recommendations for future presentation. They use assessment and student evaluation commentaries in a document called the Cohort Work Group Review. At the end of each year these documents, with the annual report from the pathway external examiner, are reviewed to provide an annual report to APU quality assurance office.

The development of this pathway is an iterative process, and as well as the QA procedure outlined above, changes will be made to reflect the needs of the learners as we progress and these become clearer. This will be reflected in the provision for cohort 2 in terms of the lessons learned from cohort 1.

f. Individual programmes approval through virtual AAC

In the first year as a part of module C1 (Induction/Online Community) through community conversations and individual negotiation with learning facilitators, students will negotiate an outline of the modules they plan to study and a title for their award. This will be submitted to a virtual AAC where members of the committee can view and comment on proposals and mark them as approved when they are satisfied they meet the criteria. This

will be an ongoing iterative process and students will 'flag' initial proposals and subsequent changes bringing them to the attention of the committee for approval. Committee members will be able to log on at a time and place of their convenience to access the proposals.