Best Practice Exchange

- Interview Guide –

Status: August 16th 2016

1st Set of Questions: Introduction and Program and/or Institution Overview

1. Could you introduce yourself and tell us about your professional career (*e. g. current position, previous positions, educational background…*)?

2. Which sorts of programs does your faculty/division/school offer (*e. g. undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, certificates, on-campus, off-campus/online, blended, other*)?

   →Why do you offer this mix/these sorts?

   →Who decides which offerings are made or is involved in those decisions?

   →Do fees for non-traditional programs differ from traditional ones?

3. What are your target groups (*e. g. educational backgrounds, study objectives, degree-level, age…*)?

   →Are there any specific reasons why you focus on those target groups?

   →Which is the biggest/smallest target group?

   →What are the biggest differences in comparison to dealing with traditional full-time students?

   →Would you say that serving other target groups than traditional full-time students is an integral part of your university/college portfolio or is it more of a niche? Why?

4. Do you offer different types of courses? If so, which (*e. g. on-campus (weekdays, weekends, blocks, day-time, evening), online, blended/flipped*)?

   →What is the proportion of the types offered?

   →Is it possible to mix those types within your programs/do your programs generally comprise of different types (e. g. blended/online/evening)?

   →Are those courses designed specifically for your target groups?

   →Do you also offer preparatory courses (“bridge courses”; e. g. in mathematics)?

5. Do your target group(s) and traditional full-time students share any points of contact (*e. g. shared courses, shared administrative facilities)*?

   → Are there courses where traditional full-time students and your target groups come together? If so, how exactly does that work? If not, why?

   →Do professors/lectures generally hold classes for both target groups (traditional vs. other)? At what ratio?

   → Do you have to motivate professors/lecturer to hold classes for others than traditional full-time students?

   →Do you use the same admission procedures for traditional full-time students and your target groups? What are the differences? Why?

2nd Set of Questions: **Flexible Curricula – Dimensions of Framing** *(also view figure 1)*

6. *Dimension 1: Program's Objective and Curriculum Definition*

Do you offer programs similar to "Model A" and/or "Model B"?

→If you do not use such models, why not? How are your programs structured instead?

7. *Dimension 2: Entry into Force of a Curriculum*

How and when are examinations regulations assigned?

→What is the content of such regulations in general and to what extent are they standardized?

→Are there other regulations affecting the flexibility of your programs?

8. *Dimension 3: Module/Course Sources Available to Design a Curriculum*

What are your course "sources"?

→If you use different course sources for your sources, do you use them for required courses, electives…?

→Is it possible to take MOOCs instead of "traditional" classes? (MOOCs from home university vs. MOOCs from other universities)

→If you use MOOCs offered by other universities, how do you recognize them (criteria, procedure etc.)?

9. *Dimension 4: Range of Module/Course Choice within Curriculum*

What's the percentage of electives in your programs on an average?

→Why this shares…?

3rd Set of Questions: **Support Services and Guidance**

10. What kinds of student support services are offered for your target groups in general?

→Are your target groups addressed by all central support facilities (likewise traditional full-time students)?

→Are there any support facilities that exclusively address your target groups? Why?

→What kinds of support facilities are offered by your division/school directly?

11. What sorts of guidance and company do you offer for your students at the different stages of the student life cycle? *(also view figure 2)*

→What specific measures, tools or instruments are used at the different stages?

→ Are there differences in dealing with undergraduate, graduate or certificate students?

→Which of those offerings are compulsory and which are optional?

→How important are those services in order to make sure that your students complete their programs successfully?

12. Building up an individual curriculum or rather choosing from a huge course catalogue can also overtax prospective students – how can such a situation be prevented? *(also view figure 3)*

Success Factors of Flexible Curricula:

→ Principle 1: The more specific a target group is (meaning that access to programs is limited to persons meeting special requirements (e. g. excellent grades, long period of vocational experience in field XY…)), the better prospective students can cope with a huge course choice/ build up an individual curriculum.

→ Principle 2: The more comprehensive (or mandatory) individual counseling is, the better prospective students can cope with a huge course choice/ building up an individual curriculum.

4th Set of Questions: Other

13. Can your students embed their existing vocational experience and real world knowledge into their studies? If so, how?

→Embed into courses, into examinations, into their research projects etc…

→If they can't embed it, why?

14. Is it possible to recognize prior learning in order to reduce the duration of a study? If so, how?

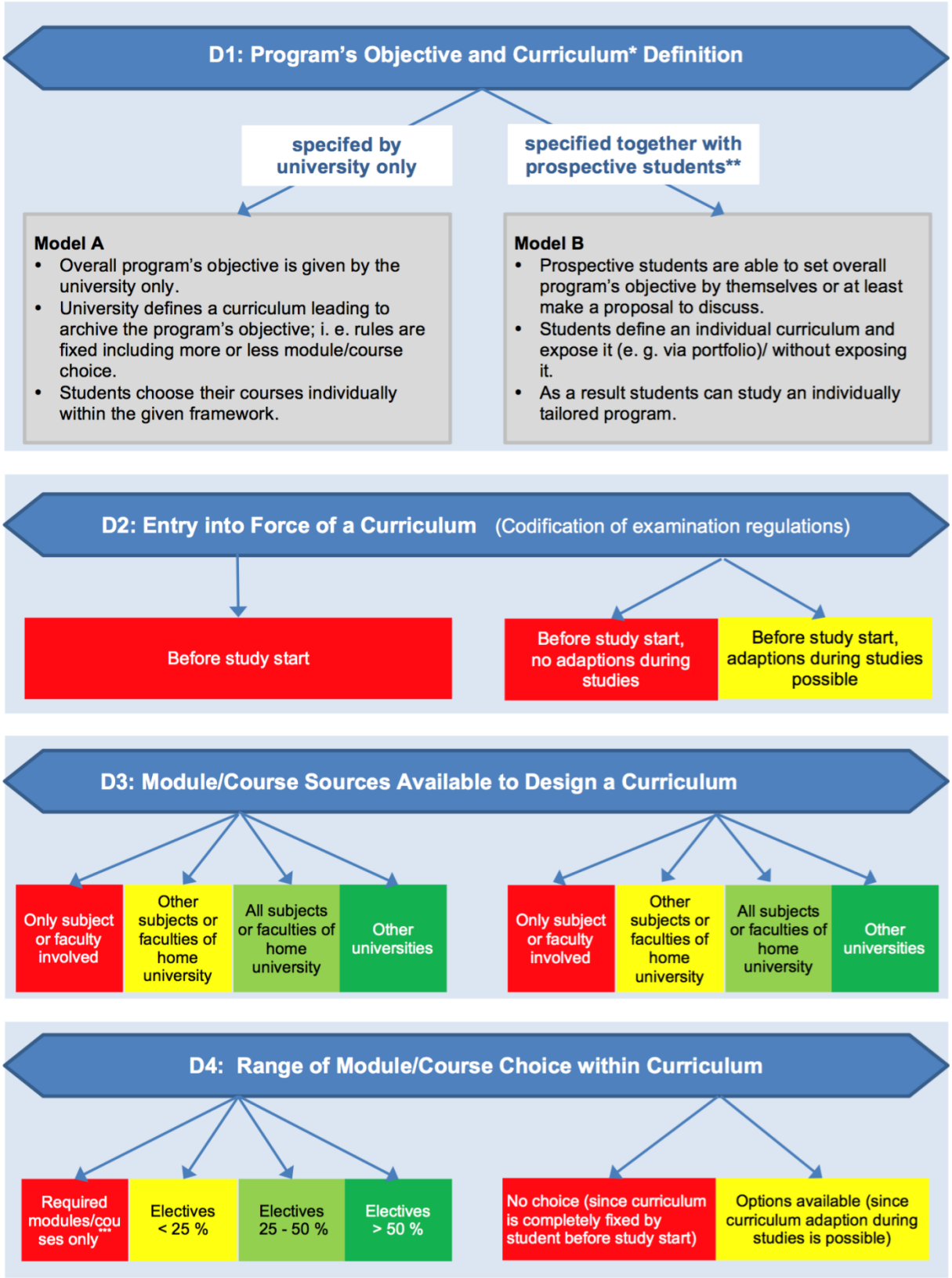
→Is there any specified recognition procedure either on program or university/college-wide level?

→If recognition of prior learning is not possible, why isn't it (not desired, procedures not implemented yet…)?

15. If you could change the overall framework in which your university/division/school is operating (e. g. university structures, politics/policies, legal regulations…) what would you do in order to serve your target groups even better?

Attachments:

Figure 1: Designing Flexible Curricula for Master Programs and Graduate Certificates, Identified Dimensions of Framing (D1 – D4)



* "Curriculum" means a fixed set of rules forming possible study-paths leading to a specific degree or certificate.
** Prospective students do not only create their "curriculum" according to fixed rules, they are also involved in fixing those rules.
*** No flexibility achieved.

Figure 2: **Student Life Cycle**

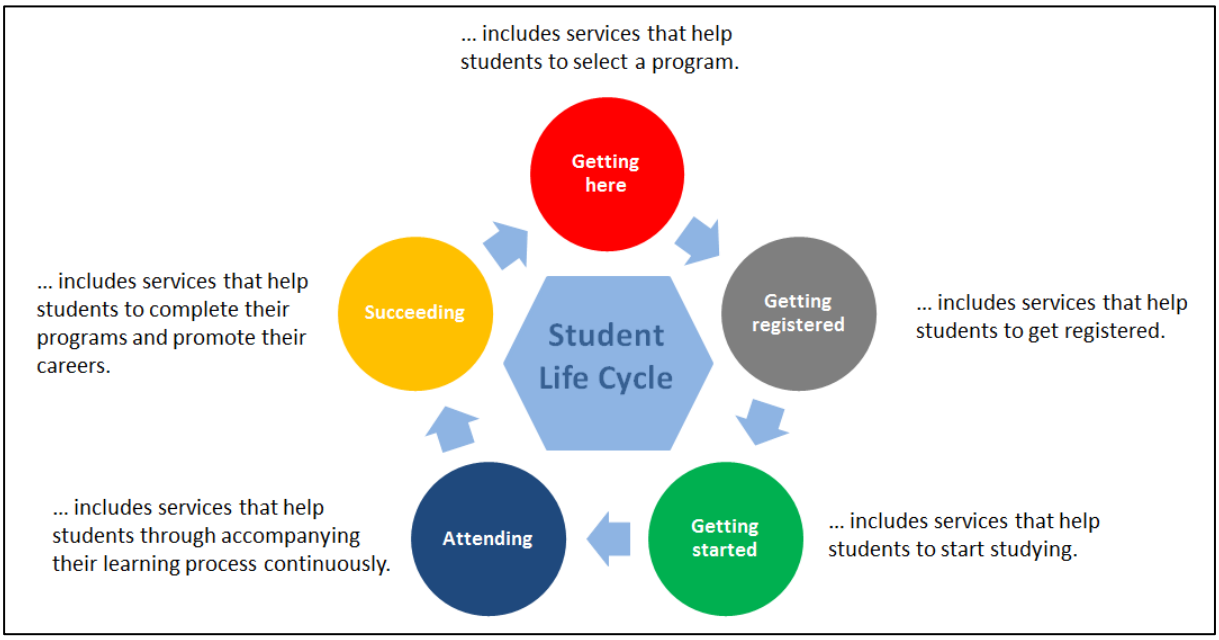
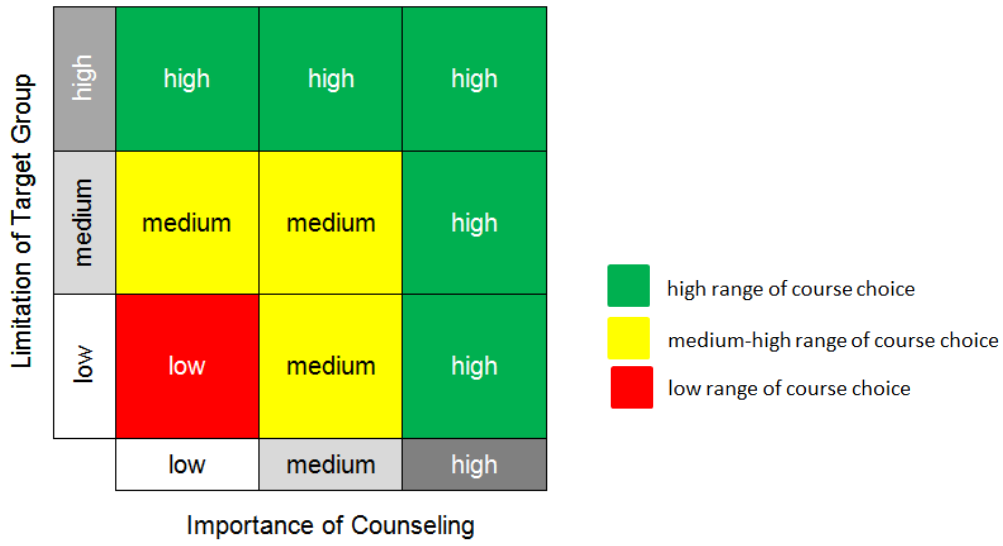


Figure 3: **Range of Course Choice**



Explanatory Notes

Success Factors of Flexible Curricula identified:

Principle 1: The more specific a target group is (meaning that access to programs is limited to persons meeting special requirements (e. g. excellent grades, long period of vocational experience in field XY…)), the better prospective students can cope with a huge course choice/ build up an individual curriculum.

Principle 2: The more comprehensive (or mandatory) individual counseling is, the better prospective students can cope with a huge course choice/ building up an individual curriculum.

→ **Figure 3** shows both principles combined!

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