

# INTO QUB International Foundation Programme Interdisciplinary Collaborative Initiative



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INTO QUB

## Introduction

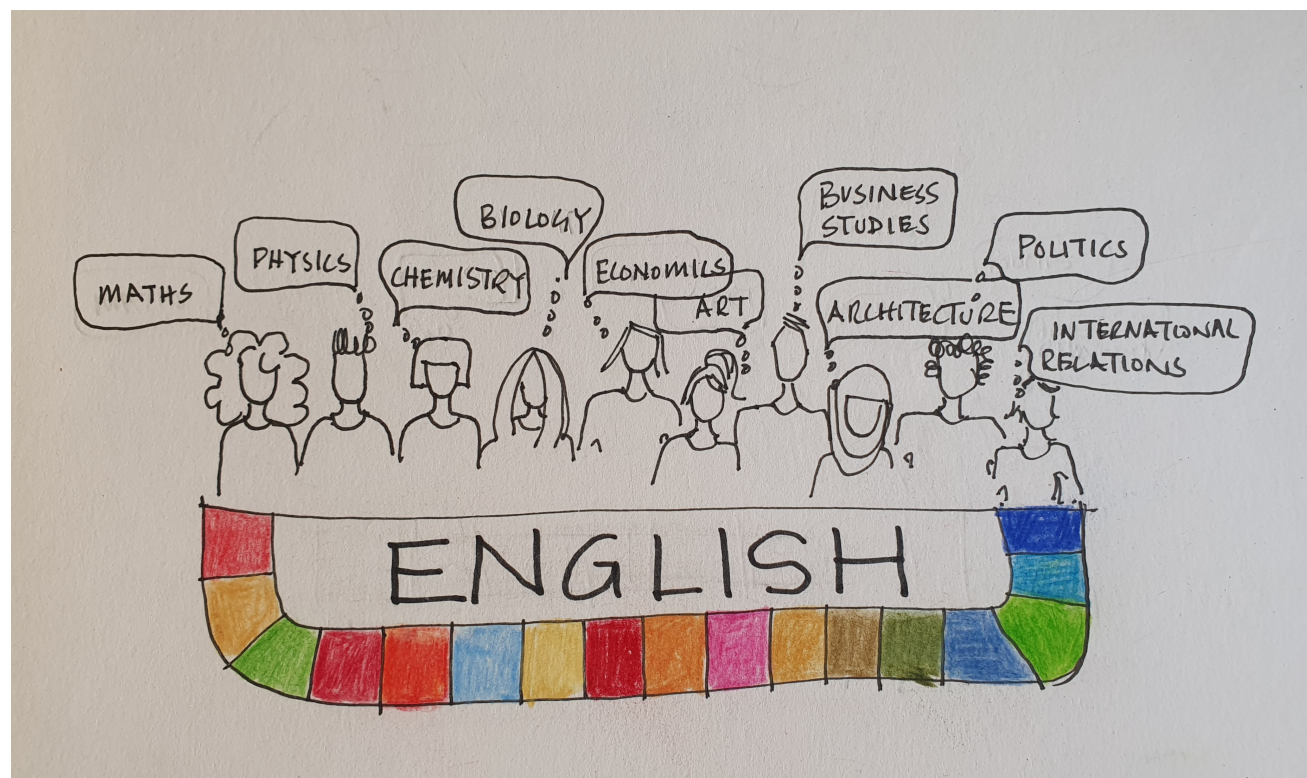
### Working with and adapting the curriculum

The aim of this proposal is to show how the Foundation teaching team at INTO Queen's University Belfast (INTO QUB) are adapting the existing curriculum in order to provide their international student body with the knowledge and skills to facilitate a future career within a changing world (SDG 4).

### Phase 1 : Common Subject English Language In Progress

The Foundation teaching team at INTO QUB developed an "education for sustainability" thread within the 2021-22 curriculum where sustainability topics are considered and debated by international students who represent not only a variety of different cultures but who are following a diverse range of paths through higher education.

This endeavour illustrates the unique opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration in a student body selecting modules from a wide range of disciplines such as: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Economics, Business Studies, Art, Architecture, Politics & International Relations.



Alongside these disciplines English Language & Study Skills (ELSS) is taken as a core subject by all INTO QUB foundation students and therefore provides an ideal environment for the sharing of different perspectives on tackling global issues. Knowledge on sustainability is gained through teaching and learning supported with debate and discussion. The resultant individual essay satisfies an existing curriculum assessment criteria.

### Phase 2 : Professional Skills Proposal

A world responding to climate change and resource shortages will require graduates to be equipped with an overarching skillset. Students embarking on higher education will need not only knowledge but the ability to be flexible and inquisitive innovators who can communicate across disciplines in order to develop creative solutions to complex problems. As educators we have a responsibility to facilitate innovative thinking.

INTO QUB has developed a **professional skills** module focused on helping students to develop their future career path. This proposal considers the possibility of further developing this content to include an assessed piece of work in the form of an **interdisciplinary project** which will provide the setting for students to work together in teams to creatively develop proposals and solutions to pertinent problems within the context of sustainability.



The teaching of this creative project could be influenced by the **pedagogical methodology** for the study of **architecture**. This discipline uses design briefs as the vehicle for student teamwork, research, debate and creativity with the output being assessed in an open shared manner with critique offered by academic and industry experts.

One key goal of this strand of education will be in the **empowerment** of the student body. The enormity of the impact of climate change can lead to fear, impotence and ambivalence. It is important that any educational endeavour gives students the opportunity for **ownership** and **leadership** through the development of outcomes that allow for maximum flexibility with regard to their achievement.



**Academic staff** may find it challenging to adapt to teaching in this manner when it means moving towards a partially unknown scenario. However, the recent pandemic has shown the **adaptability** of staff to new conditions and teaching methods. Indeed as a result of online teaching many teachers recognise their value increasingly as assessors of comprehension rather than providers of knowledge. Due to the availability of online resources, knowledge content can be sourced prior to or after the teaching session.. Therefore **time** can be found for proactive **support of interdisciplinary projects** within the Professional Skills module.

## Conclusion

### Three areas of focus

1 CURRICULUM ADAPTATION

2 STUDENT EMPOWERMENT

3 EDUCATOR BUY IN

#### References

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