

Life-wide Curriculum: An Inclusive View of a Personal Higher Education Curriculum

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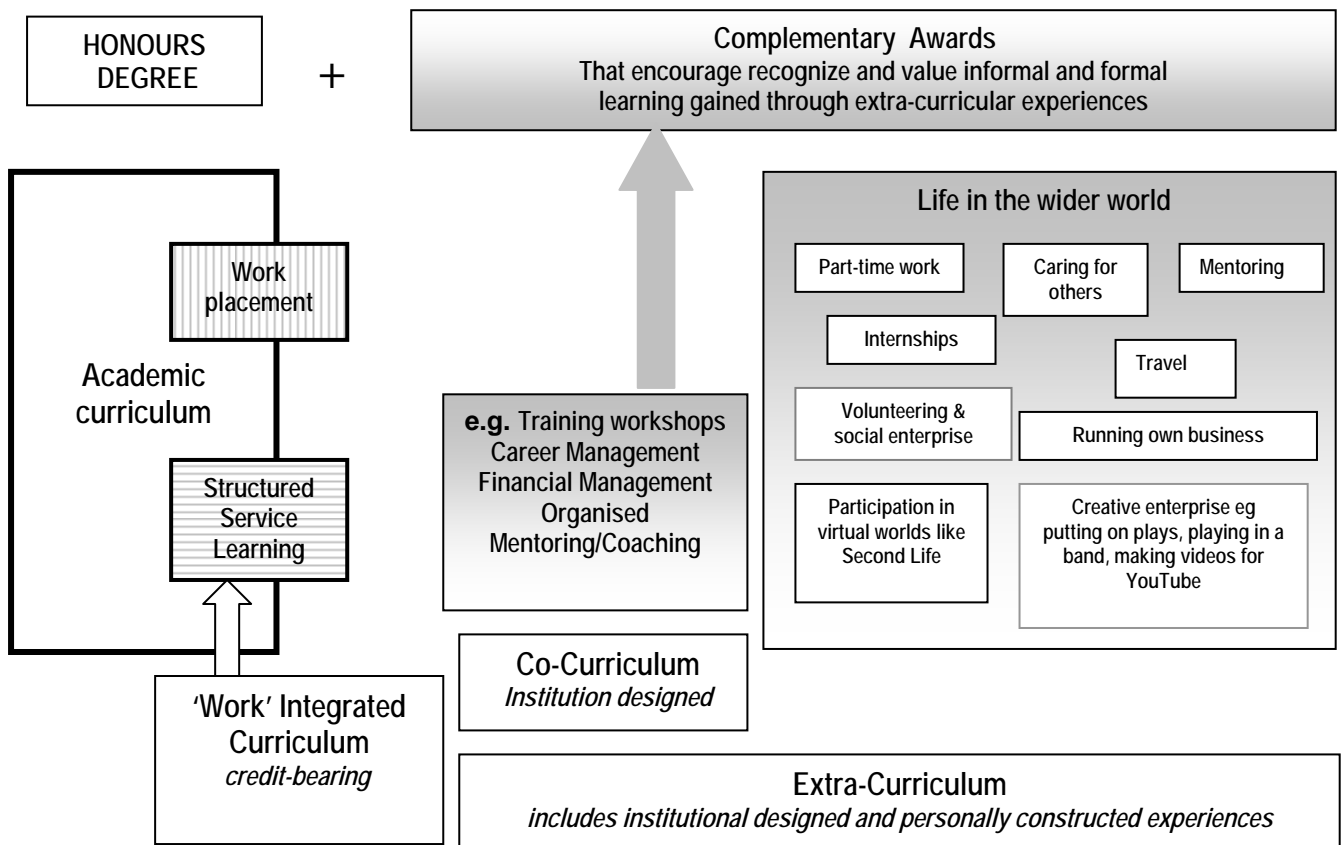
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The diagram attempts to provide a holistic and inclusive representation of a higher education curriculum: inclusive because it recognizes both institutionally designed and learner constructed experiences. The term **life-wide curriculum**¹² has been used to capture the scope and value intentions of such a curriculum.

The diagram shows three different curricular domains – 1) academic curriculum (disciplinary/interdisciplinary focus) 2) co-curriculum (designed experiences that lie outside the credit-bearing programme which may or may not receive formal recognition for learning) 3) extra-curricular experiences outside of the credit-bearing curriculum that have the potential to be integrated into a learner's personalized higher education curriculum.

Learning that is recognized and valued by a university or college may be exclusively contained within the academic curriculum. The term Work Integrated Curriculum or Structured Service Learning are sometimes used to indicate that a credit-bearing academic curriculum incorporates paid/unpaid work placement or volunteering into the educational design and learner experience. Study abroad may also be integrated into a credit-bearing academic curriculum and be recognized through the achievement of an honours degree. There are also educational designs where students may be given the opportunity for additional academic credit by participating in extra-curricular experiences. But this credit does not count directly to the degree award: it is additional credit to the 360credits needed for the award.

Universities and colleges differ in the extent to which they encourage, value and recognize learning gained from extra-curricular experiences like part-time work/ internships, volunteering, participation in student societies, sport or business enterprise and many more experiences where learning is a byproduct of some form of activity or enterprise. There is a growing movement in the UK to create new Complementary Award Frameworks to recognize and value learning gained outside the credit-bearing academic curriculum. This movement is recognizing the importance of integrative learning in a higher education experience³.



¹ Jackson (2008) A Life-Wide Curriculum: Enriching a traditional WIL scheme through new approaches to experience-based learning. Proceedings of the WACE Symposium Sydney 2008. on-line at http://www.acen.edu.au/images/resources/conferences/wace_conference_08/e-proceedings.pdf

² Jackson (in press) From a Curriculum that Integrates Work to a Curriculum that Integrates Life: Changing a University's Conceptions of Curriculum Forthcoming Special Work Integrated Learning Issue of Higher Education Research and Development (HERD)

³ Jackson (2009) Surrey Award: a design for integrative learning. Conference Paper 'Integrative Learning: Managing the Complexities Atlanta October 22-23rd 2009 on-line at <http://lifewidelearning.pbworks.com/Integrative-Learning>