What managers need to know to introduce new approaches successfully.

## Study Guide

## Introduction

Welcome to the pathway ‘What managers need to know to introduce new approaches successfully’. This short course provides guidance on how to introduce some new approaches and ways of doing things in Myanmar universities. These new approaches are:

* how to design curriculum to empower learners
* how to engage students to be more active in their learning
* how to build employability skills
* how to engage with employers.

These approaches were chosen based on experience gained by the TIDE project team from 2018 to 2021 which focused on transforming distance education in Myanmar. It worked with over 35 universities across the country building faculty and support staff capacity and senior management leadership skills to manage change. The four approaches respond to weaknesses in the current higher education system and where a lot of TIDE work has already happened. There is as a result a rich pool of legacy resources for further exploration. The goal here is to provide a basic introduction to each approach so universities can decide how to focus their change agenda. Which approaches to prioritise will be decisions of senior management teams in consultation with faculty, students and other stakeholders.

This course is entirely self-study. Each of the 4 approaches requires a least 1 hour of study. Each approach consists of a short introduction, a video presentation, and an activity to help you reflect on your learning and consider its application to your university. The course is assessed by an end of course quiz and a Statement of Participation is available.

## Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are what you will know and be able to do after studying the course. The learning outcomes of the course are:

• Understand some weaknesses in higher education teaching

• Explore new practices to address these weaknesses

• Consider how these new practices might be introduced in your university

## Course content

The course is made up of this study guide which introduces the 4 approaches and is the spine of the course guiding you on your learning journey. There is also a video presentation for each approach, and a course workbook. The workbook contains the activity to support each approach and is where you can capture your learning from the course and your answers and reflections to the activities. This will develop your thinking on managing change at your university.

## Assessment

In order to gain your Statement of Participation, a pass grade of at least 60% is needed in the end of course quiz. There is no limit to the number of times you can attempt the quiz, although only your last attempt will be counted.

## Getting started

Please go to Approach 1 to begin your study of the course

## Approach 1 How to design curriculum to empower learners

### Introduction

Since 2013 improving the quality and relevance of degrees across the higher education sector in Myanmar has become increasingly a focus. Currently curriculum design for distance education is coordinated by two distance education universities, Yangon University of Distance Education (YUDE) and Mandalay University of Distance Education (MUDE). There are currently 19 bachelor’s level courses delivered by 35 learning centres in day universities providing national coverage.

Demand for higher education in Myanmar is growing exponentially, and it is widely recognised that only distance education can deliver with the scale and urgency required. Thus, the argument in support of distance education is strong. However, the quality of distance education is not perceived by parents, students and employers to be good, with distance education degrees considered by many of a lower standard than full-time degrees. The syllabi and content of the curriculum is determined centrally and is revised infrequently. Thus, the major question is how to strengthen distance education in Myanmar. One approach is to change the curriculum to be more responsive to the needs of the growing Myanmar economy. Therefore, this approach introduces curriculum design. The learning outcomes of this approach are:

* Know the elements of curriculum design
* Understand what is involved in curriculum design
* Reflect on how curriculum design might be used at your university
* Create ideas as to how the approach can be implemented in your institution.

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Please go to the narrated presentation. After you have listened to the presentation, go to the workbook to answer the activity for this approach.

## Approach 2 How to engage students to be more active in their learning

### Introduction

The learning pedagogy in Myanmar is to encourage ‘rote-learning,’ with teaching focused on the assimilation and regurgitation of knowledge. Opportunities to apply the theoretical learning are limited which undermines the development of critical thinking and problem solving skills among students. Use of traditional approaches for teaching and learning are ineffective for producing graduates with 21st century skills.

Thus, the pedagogy of distance education has failed to adapt to flexible learning and to maximise the opportunities for more interactive teaching. Therefore, this approach considers ways in which distance education teaching can be made more interesting, dynamic and applied. It does this by looking at different types of activities that can be used in teaching to engage the student in their own learning. The learning outcomes of this approach are:

* Appreciate the difference between active and passive learning
* Understand how activities engage students and involve them in their own learning
* Know the different types of activities and when and how to use them in your teaching.
* Create ideas as to how the approach can be implemented in your institution.

Please go to the narrated presentation. After you have listened to the presentation, go to the workbook to answer the activity for this approach.

## Approach 3 How to build students’ employability skills

### Introduction

The current higher education curriculum lacks relevance to the economic needs of the country. Universities responsiveness to State, Regional and local level employer needs is constrained by a lack of university autonomy both academically and financially. This lack of readiness to meet the needs of the burgeoning Myanmar economy threatens to hold back economic development because of a skills deficit. Many international businesses are headed by expatriates or repatriates, as senior managers are difficult to find locally. Thus, improving the employability of Myanmar graduates is an important policy priority of government. This approach introduces how to build students’ employability skills in higher education teaching.

The learning outcomes of this approach are:

* Know what competences are and who uses them
* Understand the utility of competency frameworks
* Reflect on how competences can be developed in the curriculum at your university
* Create ideas as to how the approach can be implemented in your institution.

Please go to the narrated presentation. After you have listened to the presentation, go to the workbook to answer the activity for this approach.

## Approach 4 How to engage with employers

## Introduction

There is no tradition of higher education partnerships with the private sector in Myanmar. This is despite the government’s mission statement for HE in the NESP, 2016-21,

‘to produce graduate human resources who possess the required qualifications for the construction of a new modern developed, disciplined, democratic nation.’ (MOE, 2015, p.188).

The NESP envisaged that universities would act as business hubs generating fresh, innovative ideas in science, technology, organisation, the environment and health. Thus, the HE sector is seen as a major engine of growth and development in Myanmar, providing the human capital for government, industry and business, and the research and innovation to transform the economy. However, despite the ambition of the NESP, there has been little progress in higher education partnerships with the private sector. Therefore, this approach introduces employer engagement, what it is and how Myanmar universities might approach and benefit from it. The learning outcomes of this approach are:

* Explain why employer engagement is important
* Describe what employer engagement means
* Understand what good employer relationship management looks like
* Create ideas as to how the approach can be implemented in your institution.

Please go to the narrated presentation. After you have listened to the presentation, go to the workbook to answer the activity for this approach.

## Conclusion

## This short course has identified four of the major weaknesses with distance higher education in Myanmar. It has explored 4 approaches to addressing these weaknesses and provided resources and reflective questions to guide discussion on managing change. You should now be in a position to begin discussions in your universities about the future direction of change and where to focus your collective energy to strengthen distance education in Myanmar. In making these decisions, here is a simple model to help guide your discussions to boost successful change management.

## The model proposes a three stage process to maximise momentum for change, and a more comprehensive change agenda. The aim should be to build on the strengths of the existing system, most especially through access and equity, but provide different approaches which enable Myanmar universities to pilot initiatives, drive up standards, and introduce effective change.

## References:

Ministry of Education (2015) Update on drafting the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) 2016-2021.