

# Needs Assessment: Laurentis University

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## Executive Summary

This needs assessment outlines the rationale and instructional considerations for developing a hybrid, modular course at Lorentis University. In response to goals around accessibility, consistency, and instructional efficiency, a repeatable weekly structure is proposed to support learner autonomy and flexible delivery.

The document summarizes the client context, learner profile, and instructional needs. It proposes a design approach grounded in backward design and universal design for learning (UDL). The findings will guide the creation of two key deliverables: a visual storyboard and a sample module outline. Supporting planning tools are provided in the appendices, including an instructional alignment rubric, accessibility checklist, stakeholder intake questions, and a weekly module template.

## Client Background

Lorentis University is a mid-sized public institution offering a broad range of undergraduate, professional, and continuing education programs. Known for its focus on flexible, career-aligned learning, Lorentis has invested heavily in digital delivery and instructional design capacity.

The university delivers most of its programs in an asynchronous, modular format using a cloud-based learning management system. Courses are expected to meet rigorous accessibility standards and align with institutional learning frameworks that emphasize real-world application, learner autonomy, and inclusive pedagogy.

Lorentis maintains an internal team of instructional designers, content developers, and media specialists who collaborate with faculty and program managers to support ongoing course innovation.

## Situation and Rationale

Lorentis University is currently undertaking a migration of its course catalogue to a more modern and flexible format. As part of this initiative, the institution identified a need to revise and standardize the structure of its hybrid courses to reflect updated branding, ensure greater accessibility, and streamline delivery across academic departments. The legacy courses varied in format and compliance, making it difficult to ensure a consistent student experience or to apply universal design standards at scale.

The new course format is designed to provide instructors with a ready-to-use, pedagogically sound structure that balances flexibility with consistency. Each course supports hybrid delivery and includes weekly textbook readings, lecture slides, pre-recorded lectures that instructors may opt to use, and opportunities for student interaction. The design ensures that any qualified instructor can deliver the course with minimal additional preparation, while preserving a high standard of engagement.

The university's learning management system supports these goals by enabling consistent delivery, simplifying course duplication, and ensuring that accessibility features are built into the design from the start.

This needs assessment supports the development of a template course by documenting the instructional goals, learner considerations, and design rationale behind its structure. It serves as a foundation for the full visual storyboard and sample module layout provided in this portfolio.

## Target Audience

This template course is designed for undergraduate learners enrolled in a hybrid program at Lorentis University, including both full-time students and working professionals pursuing continuing education. Learners may be participating remotely, asynchronously, or on a part-time basis, and often balance academic study with employment or family obligations.

Because students may have limited prior exposure to the subject matter and varying levels of experience with online learning, the course structure emphasizes clarity, predictability, and autonomy. Each week follows a consistent pattern: textbook readings, instructor-facing lecture slides, optional recorded lectures, and interactive components that prompt reflection and application.

Universal design principles were applied from the outset to ensure content is accessible, inclusive, and flexible. The course is also designed to support reusability across departments, allowing different instructors to adapt it with minimal changes while preserving alignment with learning outcomes.

## Project Needs

The instructional design team at Lorentis University has identified a need to standardize and update a series of hybrid courses in alignment with the institution's branding, accessibility goals, and modular learning framework. Current offerings vary in structure, format, and instructional clarity, making it difficult to ensure a consistent learning experience across departments. Instructors often adapt materials independently, which can result in duplicated effort and inconsistent application of pedagogical principles.

To address these issues, the university requires a course format that can support asynchronous delivery while enabling instructors to integrate synchronous or in-person components as needed. The structure should follow a clear weekly rhythm, with scaffolded content, opportunities for interaction, and built-in instructor flexibility.

In particular, the course design must:

- Reflect consistent branding and institutional tone
- Present clearly articulated learning objectives and assessment opportunities

- Incorporate accessibility and universal design principles from the outset
- Be easy to adopt and adapt by a range of instructors with varying levels of LMS experience

These needs will inform the instructional strategy and guide the development of future planning documents, including a comprehensive storyboard and sample module structure, to be completed in the design phase.

Appendix C includes a standardized set of stakeholder intake questions used during early-stage analysis. These questions help surface delivery requirements, instructional constraints, and learner considerations that inform the instructional needs identified above.

## Solution

To address the needs identified in this assessment, a modular course structure is being proposed. This format is designed to support a consistent, high-quality learning experience for students while also streamlining instructional delivery for faculty and advancing institutional goals for accessibility and branding. A repeatable weekly structure helps learners build routines, navigate content with ease, and focus on application rather than navigation. For instructors, the structure reduces preparation time and offers a scaffolded foundation they can personalize. At the organizational level, this approach supports cross-course consistency, reduces duplication of effort, and ensures alignment with institutional learning frameworks.

Each unit is expected to include:

- Assigned readings from a selected textbook or open educational resource
- Instructor-facing lecture slides that can be adapted or supplemented as needed
- A pre-recorded lecture option for asynchronous delivery
- At least one opportunity for student interaction, such as a discussion activity, formative quiz, or reflective prompt

The goal is to create a course experience that supports both instructor efficiency and student engagement. By offering a complete weekly structure with built-in flexibility, the course can serve as a consistent foundation across sections and terms, while allowing room for instructor voice and situational adjustments. The structure will also enable easier onboarding for new faculty and contribute to long-term course maintainability.

This proposed solution will be detailed and validated during the design phase, where content and structure will be mapped out in full.

## Design Plan

The proposed course will be designed using backward design principles, beginning with clearly defined learning outcomes and aligning each week's activities and materials to those outcomes. Learning objectives will be articulated at the module level, guiding the selection and sequencing of content, activities, and assessments. This alignment will ensure that learners are progressing toward demonstrable skills or knowledge with each successive unit.

To promote consistency, the course will follow a common weekly structure across all eight modules. Each week will include a combination of required readings, lecture materials, and interactive components, all presented in a repeatable layout that supports learner autonomy and reduces navigational friction. This format is intended to create a predictable rhythm for students while supporting instructional clarity for faculty.

The design will also incorporate universal design for learning (UDL) principles, ensuring that content is accessible, multimodal, and flexible. Materials will be selected or developed with accessibility in mind from the outset, including attention to plain language, captioned media, screen reader compatibility, and inclusive visuals. The structure will also support instructor customization, allowing faculty to tailor discussions, assessments, or supplemental content without disrupting the overall flow of the course.

This plan will be formalized in the next phase through the creation of a detailed storyboard and sample module outline.

A rubric for evaluating instructional alignment is provided in Appendix A. This tool supports internal quality review by ensuring that weekly materials, activities, and assessments are clearly aligned with the stated learning objectives.

A weekly module structure template is provided in Appendix D. This layout outlines the core components and instructional rhythm proposed for the course, supporting consistency and learner autonomy across all modules.

## Implementation

The course is intended for delivery within the university's existing learning management system, using a template-based structure to ensure consistency and ease of replication across academic terms. Once developed, the course materials will be uploaded and organized into weekly modules, each following a standardized layout to support both instructor onboarding and learner navigation.

Instructors will have access to a complete course shell that includes weekly readings, lecture slides, optional pre-recorded lectures, and prompts for interaction. While the core content and structure will remain consistent, instructors will be encouraged to adapt elements such as announcements, supplemental readings, and discussion activities to suit their delivery style and student cohort.

To support successful implementation, instructional designers and teaching support staff will work collaboratively with faculty during the course launch process. This may include training on using the course shell, configuring assessments and discussion tools, and ensuring accessibility settings are correctly applied.

## **Evaluation**

To ensure that the proposed course format meets the needs of learners, instructors, and the institution, a multi-faceted evaluation strategy is planned. This approach includes both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and is designed to support iterative improvement over time. Evaluation will occur during and after the course's initial delivery and will focus on four key areas: instructor experience, learner experience, instructional alignment, and platform-based analytics.

### **1. Instructor Experience**

Instructors piloting the course will be invited to complete a post-use survey focusing on the clarity, usability, and adaptability of the course materials. Questions will assess the perceived helpfulness of pre-structured components such as lecture slides, discussion prompts, and optional recorded lectures. Where feasible, follow-up interviews or written reflections may be used to gather more detailed feedback on instructional workload, alignment with teaching style, and any barriers to customization.

### **2. Learner Experience**

Learner feedback will be collected through a mid-course pulse survey and a more comprehensive end-of-course survey. These surveys will include Likert scale and open-ended questions focused on content clarity, workload, engagement, and accessibility. Particular attention will be paid to how easily students can navigate the weekly structure and whether the modular format supports their learning preferences and time management. Optional items will also gauge the effectiveness of recorded lectures, multimedia materials, and discussion-based components.

### **3. Instructional Alignment**

To assess the alignment between course materials and learning outcomes, an internal review will be conducted prior to launch using a checklist or rubric. Instructors will also be invited to reflect at the end of the term on how well each module supported its intended objectives. These reflections will help identify activities or assessments that may require revision in future iterations.

### **4. Platform-Based Analytics**

Learning management system analytics will be used to monitor engagement patterns and identify potential areas of confusion or disengagement. Key metrics may include video completion rates, frequency of access to key resources, and participation in interactive components. This data will inform minor design adjustments and support targeted instructional support efforts.

Together, these evaluation strategies will provide a comprehensive view of the course's effectiveness and usability, guiding revisions to ensure alignment with institutional goals and learner needs.

An accessibility review checklist is included in Appendix B. This checklist is intended to guide pre-launch review and ensure alignment with WCAG and UDL standards throughout the course.

## Deliverables

The findings and recommendations outlined in this needs assessment will guide the development of two instructional planning documents to be included in the design phase of this portfolio:

### Visual Storyboard Template

A comprehensive storyboard outlining the full structure of the eight-week course. This document will include proposed learning objectives, content sequencing, activity formats, and instructor guidance to support consistent delivery and instructional clarity.

### Sample Module Outline

A standalone layout for a single module, demonstrating how weekly content will be organized within the learning management system. This outline will reflect the modular structure proposed in this assessment and serve as a model for scalable course development.

These deliverables will operationalize the instructional strategy described in this document and provide a foundation for ongoing development and refinement.

## Conclusion

This needs assessment provides a foundation for the instructional design of a hybrid, modular course at Lorentis University. It identifies the contextual factors, learner needs, and institutional goals that inform the proposed solution, and outlines a strategic plan for course design and evaluation. By focusing on clarity, accessibility, and reusability, the course will support a consistent learning experience while remaining flexible for instructor adaptation. The deliverables that follow will translate this analysis into practical, design-ready formats, supporting a scalable approach to course development that aligns with the university's long-term teaching and learning priorities.

## Appendix

### Appendix A Instructional Alignment Rubric

| Criteria | Exceeds Expectations<br>(3) | Meets Expectations<br>(2) | Needs Improvement<br>(1) |
|----------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
|----------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|

|                                   |                                                                                          |                                                                                                                  |                                                           |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Learning Objectives Clarity       | Objectives are specific, measurable, and clearly aligned with institutional outcomes     | Objectives are stated and broadly align with intended outcomes<br>Objectives are vague, overly broad, or missing | Objectives are vague, overly broad, or missing            |
| Content Alignment                 | All content directly supports weekly objectives and builds toward cumulative outcomes    | Most content supports weekly objectives with minimal deviation                                                   | Content appears disconnected from stated objectives       |
| Assessment Alignment              | Assessments clearly measure stated learning outcomes using appropriate format            | Assessments are present and generally align with weekly goals                                                    | Assessments do not reflect or support learning objectives |
| Scaffolding and Sequencing        | Content is introduced in a logical progression with strong support for skill development | Content follows a consistent structure with moderate scaffolding                                                 | Content is disorganized or lacks clear progression        |
| Accessibility and UDL Application | Multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression are consistently applied    | Accessibility is considered and mostly implemented                                                               | Accessibility and UDL strategies are minimal or missing   |

## Appendix B Accessibility Review Checklist

| Checklist Item                                                      | Status                            | Comments |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| All text uses sufficient color contrast (e.g., 4.5:1 for body text) | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete |          |
| Headings follow a semantic structure (e.g., H1 → H2 → H3)           | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete |          |
| All images include descriptive alternative text                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete |          |
| Videos include accurate closed captions                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete |          |
| Audio content is accompanied by transcripts                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete |          |

|                                                                          |                                   |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Links are descriptive (avoid "click here")                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete |  |
| Tables use proper headers and avoid merged cells when possible           | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete |  |
| Text is written in plain language where appropriate                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete |  |
| Multiple means of representation are present (text, audio, visual, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete |  |
| Navigation is consistent across modules                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete |  |
| Keyboard-only navigation is possible and logical                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete |  |
| Course content is tested using an accessibility checker or screen reader | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete |  |

## Appendix C Stakeholder Intake Questions

| Category           | Sample Questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Project Background | - What prompted the development of this course?- Is this a new course, or a revision of an existing one?- Are there institutional or program-level learning outcomes this must align with?                                                              |
| Audience           | - Who is the primary learner audience?- Are there specific learner needs or challenges we should consider?- What assumptions can we make about learners' prior knowledge?                                                                               |
| Content & Pedagogy | - What types of content will be central to this course (e.g., readings, case studies, media)?- Are there key pedagogical strategies you would like to include?- Should the course encourage collaboration, discussion, or independent work?             |
| Delivery Context   | - Will this course be delivered fully online, hybrid, or in another format?- Will multiple instructors use this course? How much flexibility do they need?- What LMS features (quizzes, discussions, gradebook, release conditions) should we plan for? |

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Success & Evaluation | - What does success look like for this course?- How should we evaluate whether the course is working?- Are there specific metrics or feedback channels we should build in? |
| Constraints          | - Are there any deadlines, budget considerations, or content limitations we should know about?- Who else needs to review or approve the final course?                      |

## Appendix D Weekly Module Template Structure

| Section             | Contents & Notes                                                                |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Module Introduction | Brief overview of weekly focus and relevance to overall course objectives       |
| Module Objectives   | 3–5 measurable learning objectives, listed clearly at the top of the page       |
| Key Concepts        | 2–4 essential topics or themes addressed in the module                          |
| Assigned Readings   | Specific chapters or sections from primary and/or secondary sources             |
| Lecture Content     | Slide deck for instructor use- Optional pre-recorded lecture with transcript    |
| Lecture Practice    | Short quiz or knowledge check (formative), with immediate feedback              |
| Discussion Activity | Prompt with application-focused questionsGrading rubric and participation guide |

|                             |                                                                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Module Assignment</b>    | Practice assignment or applied task (e.g., case study, written reflection) |
| <b>Final Checklist</b>      | Interactive checklist to support learner self-monitoring                   |
| <b>Preview of Next Week</b> | Brief teaser or learning hook for the following module                     |