

Learning and Teaching Strategy 2015 – 2018

1 Introduction

1.1 The University of Worcester's mission is to be an outstanding University at which to be a student and of which to be a graduate, so that our students:

- flourish and achieve their full potential
- are challenged and encouraged to grow intellectually
- acquire high level employability skills
- become self-confident, active citizens who participate fully in society
- graduate with a strong capacity for lifelong learning
- participate fully in the University community
- take part in fulfilling cultural, sporting and community activities
- understand, appreciate and practise concepts of professionalism and apply these as graduates of the University
- enjoy their time in higher education
- become good ambassadors for the University.

1.2 The University recognises that the changing context for higher education poses challenges, and demands new capabilities of both staff and students. We must continue to evidence a commitment to enhancement and innovation in course development, curriculum design, inspirational teaching, and well-managed assessment for learning. We will need to ensure our courses continue to support intellectual development and academic achievement whilst also meeting the diverse needs of students, employers and society in relation to flexible pedagogies, student employability, and promoting values and capabilities relevant to a globalised and digital world. This will mean greater emphasis for both staff and students on professional development, participation and engagement, as well as working in partnership to effectively develop, manage and enhance courses and learning experiences. This Learning and Teaching Strategy sets out how these challenges will be addressed.

1.3 We aim to inspire our students for life and to challenge them to reach their full potential through excellent, innovative courses, research informed curricula and teaching and learning, and by providing an environment that supports learning in all its forms. Central to these aims is a commitment to be recognised through the Teaching Excellence Framework for providing an excellent educational experience for students.

1.4 The University defines an excellent educational experience as one in which students:

- will experience courses that are inspiring and intellectually challenging
- are strongly motivated to become independent learners through carefully designed active, participative and effective learning experiences
- interact with academic and professional staff who are committed to facilitating excellent, inclusive, learning support
- develop capabilities that impact upon their personal development, their current and future employment opportunities and their aspirations for further study and professional advancement
- are effectively inducted into research-informed academic communities of the University to become lifelong autonomous learners

- are provided with regular, timely and constructive feedback and ‘feed-forward’ on their learning and progress
- study within an environment that makes effective use of learning technologies
- engage as partners in the development and enhancement of their educational experiences
- identify themselves as active members of the University recognising and practising the values of ethical and social responsibility, active citizenship and professionalism
- graduate with the knowledge, understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes for a globalised and digital world, recognising the importance of sustainable development
- express high levels of satisfaction with their experience.

1.5 This Learning and Teaching Strategy takes the University Strategic Plan as a key reference point, and is intended to inform and be informed by University strategies and policies including those relating to research, ethics, human resources, information and learning technologies, quality assurance and enhancement, and the student experience.

2 Strategic Goals

2.1 The University has identified the following five strategic goals which will shape the University’s approach to learning and teaching over the period 2015 – 2018:

1. To ensure students benefit from **inspirational, intellectually challenging and inclusive teaching and learning** underpinned by first rate learning environments and resources
2. To design **contemporary and relevant course curricula** offering students learning experiences that are research-informed and promote enquiry-based learning and critical thinking
3. To equip students to fulfil their potential and become **lifelong learners, with capabilities for employability, enterprise creation and continuing professional development** that enable them to be successful
4. To engage **students as partners in planning, managing and enhancing learning experiences**, and in so doing, support them to develop professional and ethical behaviours consistent with University values
5. To provide **effective Personal Academic Tutoring and support systems** ensuring high rates of student retention, progression and achievement.

2.2 In order to realise the strategic goals a set of objectives have been identified for each of the above goals. The objectives are framed as commitments to be further developed or achieved by the end of the period of the strategy; some are already matters of policy and ‘in progress’, others are ‘new’. The intention is to state objectives that relate to student and staff outcomes, and give due emphasis to the responsibilities of individuals, course teams, managers, and the University institutionally and/or collectively.

2.3 For each of the goals, a set of ‘success indicators’ has been identified. These are not intended to be definitive measures of strategy implementation, and do not cover all objectives. They have been identified as reasonable indicators of the progress expected to be made as we implement the strategy over the next five years.

2.4 Implementation of the strategy can also be assessed in relation to more qualitative success measures, including feedback from external examiners and external advisors in quality assurance and enhancement processes, the reports of external agencies, such as QAA, Ofsted, and PSRBs.

2.5 The University has identified a sixth strategic goal for learning and teaching over the next period concerning the way in which technologies have a key role to play in providing and outstanding educational experience for all students:

To adopt a **strategic and purposeful approach to the development of technology enhanced learning** that will significantly impact on the **digital capabilities** of all staff and students of the University.

2.6 This strategic and purposeful approach to the development of technology enhanced learning is set out in a separate document, in order to make explicit the context and the vision to all members of the University.

3 Objectives and success indicators

Strategic Goal 1: Excellence in teaching and student learning

To ensure students benefit from inspirational, intellectually challenging and inclusive teaching and learning underpinned by first rate learning environments and resources.

We will:

- Encourage all academic staff and staff who support learning to gain appropriate professional recognition through achievement of Higher Education Academy Fellowship status
- Implement a new peer supported review of teaching (PSRT) scheme to share, promote and disseminate effective pedagogic practice
- Engage all staff who have teaching and learning support responsibilities in planned continuous professional development for teaching, learning and assessment and formalise this within staff appraisal processes
- Expect all staff to have or develop skills in the effective use of digital technologies for learning and teaching
- Align University staff recruitment, promotion, recognition and reward systems to more directly and explicitly support the achievement of the University's strategic aims in relation to teaching excellence as set out in the University [People Strategy](#)
- Raise the profile of University excellence in learning and teaching through research, publication and knowledge transfer
- Ensure the development of learning spaces provides excellent flexible technology-enabled facilities that support inclusive and interactive learning.

Success indicators

- Staff with HEA Associate Fellow/ Fellow/Senior Fellow/ Principal Fellow/ NTF status
- Modules with 85%+ satisfaction
- UWSS and NSS satisfaction scores for teaching
- Staff engagement with professional development opportunities for learning and teaching (including participation in peer supported review of teaching PSRT, and TEL development workshops)
- TEL development
- External engagement with learning and teaching innovation, scholarship and development

Strategic Goal 2: Progressive and inspiring curricula

To design contemporary and relevant course curricula offering students learning experiences that are research-informed and promote enquiry-based learning and critical thinking

We will:

- Ensure new course developments are underpinned by appropriate market research, including student and employer perspectives
- Encourage and support innovation in course design, drawing on and integrating where appropriate, inter-disciplinarity, work-based learning, flexible pedagogies and blended learning
- Ensure all students are able to benefit from a curriculum and learning experiences that are research informed, led, inspired or engaged
- Develop course curricula that explicitly take account of University commitments to inclusion, internationalisation and to economic, environmental and social sustainability as detailed in the University [Curriculum Design Policy](#)
- Ensure all students understand the principles of academic integrity, develop research skills within their studies and are able to apply them as effective and ethical researchers
- Further develop the effectiveness of assessment and feedback strategies for student learning as set out in the University [Assessment Policy](#) and [Student Feedback Charter](#), using appropriate methodologies, eg TESTA
- Embed the development of information literacy and digital fluency within the curriculum
- Provide support for course leaders and other staff leading course development in planning, designing and implementing coherent curricula that support active student development and engagement in learning.

Success indicators

- Courses that successfully recruit
- Employer and student/graduate engagement in course design and review
- UWSS and NSS satisfaction scores for assessment and feedback and course challenge
- Implementation of commitments to embedding information literacy, digital fluency, inclusion, internationalisation and sustainability in student learning experiences
- Staff and student engagement with research informed, led, inspired, engaged teaching
- Course assessment and feedback strategies reviewed through TESTA

Strategic Goal 3: Highly employable graduates

To equip students to fulfil their potential and become lifelong learners, with capabilities for employability, enterprise creation and continuing professional development that enable them to be successful.

We will:

- Ensure all courses have an explicit strategy for developing student employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship, which takes account of the development of relevant graduate, professional and transferable skills and attributes
- Provide all undergraduate students with the opportunity to experience work-based learning or learning from work within the curriculum and significantly increase the number of students who take up work-based learning opportunities
- Further develop opportunities within courses for students to engage in employment based and community based learning initiatives
- Embed careers education into the curriculum

- Expect all subject areas to develop external employer and/or alumni links and have processes in place whereby employers and professional bodies can contribute to the review and development of course curricula
- Develop measures of learning gain.

Success indicators

- Proportion of undergraduate leavers in work or study
- Proportion undergraduate leavers in graduate level employment
- NSS satisfaction scores for careers education and personal development
- Explicit employability and entrepreneurship strategies (including employer engagement and careers education) at Institute/course levels
- Student take up of placement opportunities

Strategic Goal 4: Students as partners in learning and academic communities

To engage students as partners in planning, managing and enhancing learning experiences, and in so doing, support them to develop professional and ethical behaviours consistent with University values.

We will:

- Actively promote a culture of student engagement with, and responsibility for, learning
- Make use of recognised measures of student engagement as part of the annual University of Worcester Student Survey
- Ensure all students have the opportunity to make their views on their learning experience known to the University through systems of representation and student feedback and evaluation, at module, course, Institute and University levels as appropriate
- Further develop the effectiveness of the Student Academic Representatives (StARs) system, through training for StARs and course leaders in effective partnership working
- Continue to encourage course and curriculum development through a staff/student project scheme (Students as Partners Projects (SAPs)) that makes a significant contribution to the development of learning, teaching and assessment
- Provide development opportunities for course leaders to enhance academic leadership and management skills.

Success indicators

- UWSS and NSS satisfaction with StARs system and student feedback mechanisms
- Student engagement with learning (as measured through UWSS and NSS student engagement measures)
- Number of SAP project applications and successful completions
- Course leader engagement in training and development opportunities

Strategic Goal 5: Supporting academic progression and achievement

To provide effective Personal Academic Tutoring and support systems that ensure high rates of student retention, progression and achievement

We will:

- Enable students to reflect on, plan and review their own personal and academic skills, and to develop well supported and articulated claims to achievement through personal development planning processes
- Establish clear entitlements to academic support at University, Institute and course level, including for Personal Academic Tutoring as detailed in the University [Personal Academic Tutoring Policy](#), and ensure this is regularly evaluated
- Ensure student induction is underpinned by University values, begins pre-entry and is re-visited on key student transition points (such as start of new academic year, preparation for work experience etc)
- Develop and implement the capacity for electronic management of assessment to meet student and staff needs for effective, timely and efficient feedback processes
- Ensure teaching, learning and assessment practices are inclusive, (or where necessary make reasonable adjustments for disabled students) to support all students to achieve their academic potential
- Improve the information available to students to support transitions and choices at all stages of the student journey through higher education.

Success indicators

- Student satisfaction with academic support and Personal Academic Tutor systems (overall and for specific groups, eg mature/disabled/BME groups)
- Student retention, progression and achievement data (overall and for specific groups, eg mature/disabled/BME groups)
- Student and staff feedback on use of learning technologies
- Use of learner analytics to support tracking of student progress

4 Implementation and monitoring of progress

4.1 Progress in implementing the strategy will be reviewed annually by LTSEC.

4.2 Institutes and professional support departments will ensure their planning, review and evaluation processes explicitly address implementation of this strategy. Institutes will be expected to address all of the strategic goals; professional support departments will draw on these as relevant.

4.3 All courses will continue to have their own enhancement plans which will be discussed and monitored through Course Management Committees, and scrutinised through the annual evaluation process.

4.4 The University will provide courses and Institutes with appropriate data in order to measure progress and success.

4.5 The Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (LTSEC) will receive an annual report on progress in implementing the Strategy.

Glossary of terminology

Digital fluency is the ability to use digital tools to effectively and ethically create, communicate and collaborate in professional and academic environments. It is about knowing when, why and how to use different forms of technology in a digitally connected world. It encompasses IT competencies, information literacy and the skills to engage in online discussion, collaborations and the shared construction of knowledge.

Digital technologies are electronic tools, systems, devices and resources that generate, store or process data. These include virtual learning environments, e-portfolios, social

media, online games and applications, multimedia, productivity applications, cloud computing, interoperable systems and mobile devices.

Employability is a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupation, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy (Yorke, 2006).

Enterprise involves measures to encourage individuals to become entrepreneurs and equip them with the necessary skills to make a business successful (Mason, 2000). In essence enterprise is about spotting opportunities, creating new ideas and having the confidence and capabilities to turn these ideas into working realities (Nixon, 2004).

Entrepreneurship is an activity which leads to the creation and management of a new organisation designed to pursue a unique, innovative opportunity (Hindle & Rushworth, 2000). Fundamentally, it is about using enterprise to create new business, new businesses and 'can-do' organisations and services (Nixon, 2004).

Flexible pedagogies refers to approaches to learning linked with the demand for increased flexibility of pace, place and mode of delivery, and the empowerment of learners. It is often related to technology enhanced, blended and online learning and work-based and negotiated learning.

Information literacy is knowing when and why one needs information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals – CILIP).


Learning analytics is the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of data about learners and their contexts - in this case from their digital footprints - for purposes of understanding and enhancing learning and the environments in which it occurs.

Learning gain is the improvement in knowledge, skills, work-readiness and personal development made by students during their time spent in higher education.

Student engagement refers to both the degree of motivation, interest and attention that students show when they are learning or being taught, and also the participation of students in quality enhancement and quality assurance processes, resulting in the improvement of their educational experience (UK Quality Code Chapter B5 Student Engagement).

TESTA (Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment) is an approach through programme level review of assessment to identify study behaviour and, working with students and course teams, to generate assessment patterns to foster effective learning.

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Related Policies, Procedures and Guidance	Assessment Policy Curriculum Design Policy Ethics Policy Module Evaluation Policy Peer Supported Review of Teaching Policy People Strategy



[Personal Academic Tutoring Policy](#)
[Research Strategy](#)
[Student Feedback Charter](#)
[Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy](#)