



PRIMARY MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE

An Outstanding Student Experience

Introduction

1. The Board has adopted a set of Primary Measures of Performance against which the University's progress towards achieving the success criteria set out in the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan. In doing so the Board recognised that it is one of its primary responsibilities to establish key performance indicators in order to monitor the performance of the institution and where possible to benchmark against other institutions.
2. In the course of the last review of its own effectiveness the Board spent a considerable time on this part of its role and responsibilities, and drew on the work of the Committee of University's Chairs (CUC) which has developed and published recommended KPIs for use in the sector. The Board agreed to amend these to establish a set of measures which it considered fit for purpose.
3. The Board agreed that the performance measures relating to a particular section of the Strategic Plan should be reviewed at each Board rather than to receive a voluminous report on an annual basis. The Board also expressed a desire that in receiving the measures an appropriate commentary should accompany them.
4. This is the first occasion on which the Board will receive a report of this nature.

Key Success Criteria

5. There are six success criteria in the section of the Strategic Plan titled "An Outstanding Student Experience"
 - To increase high levels of student satisfaction as evidence by measures such as National Student Survey and internal surveys
 - To achieve external recognition of our excellence in learning and teaching and support for students
 - To establish an effective framework of market research to ensure that new courses meet the needs of their target population
 - To introduce structured opportunities for greater employer involvement in course development, validation and review and to greatly improve work based learning opportunities

- To increase participation by students in learning opportunities that promote employability, enterprise and entrepreneurial skills, especially through the introduction of opportunities for students to gain work experience.
- To support an active Students' Union, which provides opportunities for students to participate in a broad range of activities, in support of their academic studies, including student representation at all levels.

Levels of Student Satisfaction

6.

	2007	2008
The teaching on my course	4.0	4.1
Assessment and feedback	3.7	3.7
Academic support	3.9	3.9
Organisation and management	3.7	3.8
Learning resources	3.7	3.8
Personal development	4.1	4.2
Overall satisfaction	4.1	4.1

7. The key points to note are:

- National average of NSS respondents either 'mostly' or 'definitely' agreeing with the statement that they were satisfied overall with the quality of their course: 82% (range of 63% - 96%)
- For students completing their studies at the University of Worcester: 85%, joint 11th using this relatively crude measure
- In 2008, there was an increase in overall results for teaching, organisation and management, learning resources, and personal development
- Assessment and feedback is the University's lowest scoring area
- Variations across subject areas: scores for overall satisfaction range from 3.7 to 4.4

8. In the recently published Independent Education League Tables a separate league table on Student Satisfaction was published and out of a total of 113 institutions the University of Worcester was placed 33. A comparison with our benchmark institutions is as follows.

Bath Spa University	22
Bucks New University	106
Canterbury Christchurch	64
Birmingham City University	98
Chester	70
Coventry	101
Gloucestershire	73
Liverpool Hope	-
Northampton	48
Staffordshire	62
UWE	39
Wolverhampton	99
Worcester	33

Student Retention, Progression and Completion

9. Clearly, one of the important measures of an excellent student experience is ensuring that students are able to achieve their full potential and wherever possible complete their original study intention.
10. Each year a HEFCE performance indicator for student retention is published which measures non-continuation following year of entry for full time first degree students. The University's performance in the last three years is shown below:

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Withdrawals	12.4%	12.2%	9.5%	Not available

[These percentages are calculated over a 2 year period]

11. The PI for 2007/2008 will be published shortly but internal statistics indicate that first year withdrawal rate in 2007/2008 of just over 10%.

12. The University's position relative to its benchmark institutions is shown below:

Institution	Ranking 1-13	2005-2006		2004-2005		2003-2004	
		% no longer in HE	Benchmark (%)	% no longer in HE	Benchmark (%)	% no longer in HE	Benchmark (%)
Bath Spa	1	6.3	12.2	8.6	9.4	9.4	10.7
Buck New Uni	5	10.2	12.4	10.4	12.0	8.0	12.4
Canterbury Christchurch	6	10.3	10.2	9.0	10.0	9.3	10.5
BCU	9	11.3	9.7	10.0	11.1	11.6	12.0
Chester	7	10.7	9.4	18.3	9.9	13.5	10.7
Coventry	8	10.9	10.6	12.7	11.0	12.6	11.5
Gloucs	2	7.4	9.8	7.4	10.7	12.3	11.8
Liverpool Hope	=10	12.1	10.7	14.3	11.3	14.7	12.1
Northampton	=10	12.1	11.1	13.0	11.0	13.1	11.6
Staffordshire	12	12.8	11.1	11.5	11.2	11.6	11.5
UWE	3	9.4	9.7	10.0	9.5	10.6	10.1
Wolverhampton	13	14.5	11.7	13.6	12.0	12.6	12.6
Worcester	4	9.5	10.7	12.2	11.3	12.4	11.7

13. There is another measure which calculates the likelihood of completion (that is achievement of the original qualification aim) and the latest figure for the University of Worcester is 83.9%. This is one of the categories included in the Independent League Table and the University's position compared with its benchmark institutions as included in the table is as follows:

Bath Spa	87.1	(1)
Bucks New University	79.7	(6)
Canterbury Christchurch	80.3	(5)
Birmingham City University	75.4	(10)
Chester	78.2	(8)
Coventry	75.2	(11)
Gloucestershire	82.1	(3)
Liverpool Hope	-	-
Northampton	81.4	(4)
Staffordshire	78.1	(9)
UWE	78.8	(7)
Wolverhampton	73.4	(12)
Worcester	83.9	(2)

[Mean: 83.63

Max 99.05

Min 56]

14. Although these previous 3 tables suggest that the University has no fundamental problem around retention there are some areas of concern. In his last report the Chief External Examiner for the University's Undergraduate Modular Scheme commented on the high number of students who do not pass sufficient credits to be in a position to progress or complete at the summer examination board and this was identified as an issue in the annual report to Academic Board on the monitoring of the University's quality and standards. The outcome of the HEFCE Audit also confirms that there are issues around the high levels of non-submission especially amongst full time undergraduate students studying in the Undergraduate Modular Scheme. Further work is being undertaken and measures are being considered to address these issues.
15. The proportion of students obtaining a good degree (i.e First or Upper Second) is a commonly used measure of the status of institutions. The University of Worcester usually appears quite low in this regard and although there has been some recent improvement the proportion of good degrees awarded in 2007/08 (48.4%) remains low in comparison with other institutions, as shown in the following table. The table also shows entry standards as they appear in the recent Independent League Table and as can be seen, although not the very lowest, entry standards for the University, as calculated by the average number of UCAS tariff points, is relatively low.

Institution	Good degrees		Entry Standards	
Bath Spa	67.7	1	287	1
Bucks New University	64.3	2	210	11
Canterbury Christchurch	49.7	10	238	7
Birmingham City University	57.3	6	258	5
Chester	54.8	7	267	4
Coventry	61	5	280	2
Gloucestershire	61.3	4	239	6
Liverpool Hope	-		-	
Northampton	53.7	8	233	9
Staffordshire	53	9	232	10
UWE	63.2	3	275	3
Wolverhampton	44.6	12	204	12
Worcester	48.4	11	236	8

[Mean: 61.56
Max: 91.07
Min 44.42]

[Mean: 313.7
Max: 528.54
Min: 178.58]

External Review and Evaluation

16. One of the primary measures of performance must be the external assessment of the quality of the University's academic provision. The University recently submitted its mid-cycle report following the 2005 Institutional Audit by the QAA and the Agency in its response confirmed that good progress has been made in implementing the recommendations arising out of the audit. The next institutional audit is scheduled for 2010/11,
17. There have been two recent Ofsted inspections. An inspection of the University's Primary Education was awarded an overall grade 1 and the quality of training provided was classed as outstanding. As a result the University is now recognised by the TDA as a grade A training provider. The University's Further Education Teacher Training programme, which is offered in collaboration with 4 FE colleges, was also inspected and awarded a grade 3, "adequate". Some significant developments have taken place but other areas were identified for improvement and an action plan has been developed.
18. Nursing provision at the University has been subject to annual monitoring by the Nursing & Midwifery Council (and for the first time) the West Midlands Strategic Health Authority. The outcomes of both found provision to be entirely satisfactory. A number of new courses have recently achieved professional body recognition by, for example the Health Professions Council, General Social Care Council and the National Youth Association. Such recognition and the maintenance of it are important in kite marking the quality of the University's provision.

Academic Provision – meeting the needs of the target population

19. The performance measure which relates to meeting the needs of the target population might be measured against the perceived popularity of the University's courses and also the extent to which they are perceived to met desired outcomes. Future employment prospects is clearly an important element.
20. The University's courses, particularly at undergraduate level, are clearly popular and in the last five years the University's applications through UCAS have increased by more than 100%. The report to this meeting of the Board confirms good progress continues to be made. One statistic which highlights this trend is that applications per place for full time UMS courses have risen from 1.4 in 2006/07 to 3.7 now. This is the result of excellent work undertaken on course development and also the marketing and promotion of the University.
21. However, growth has been predominately at undergraduate level and the growth in the number of postgraduate students, apart from one or

two areas, has been more modest. Whilst there has been some success in attracting students from other EU countries, the number of international fee paying students remains low. In terms of the further growth and development of the University enhanced provision at postgraduate level and through work based learning, and greater appeal internationally must be institutional priorities.

22. The University's objective to ensure maximum opportunities for work experience and the acquisition of employability skills is the focus of a number of projects through both the Business Development Office and the Academic Development and Practice Unit. These include an enhancing student employability project and activities through SPEED, Enterprise Fest and the Worcester Innovators Network. The University also seeks to offer employment opportunities to its students.
23. The majority of courses offer opportunities for work placement, work experience, or work based learning. The take up of these opportunities varies and at present it is difficult to present accurate data on the number of students involved in these activities. However, from 2009 onwards the Student Records system will be used to record these activities and in future reports can be made and progress measured.
24. There is a survey of the first destination of leavers from higher education each year and the survey for 2007/08 graduates shows that for the University of Worcester:
 - Overall unemployment: 4.2% (3.8)
 - Employed in public sector: 74%
 - 76.8% went with graduate level employment
 - UMS graduates: 53.9% graduate level
25. The table below compares the percentage of graduates in work or studying in 2006/07 with benchmark institutions and also a heading "Graduate Prospects" which relates to graduates who entered graduate level employment.

	First Destination Statistics		Graduate Prospects	
Bath Spa	96.8	=2	59	=9
Bucks New University	91.2	=12	50.9	11
Canterbury Christchurch	92.0	10	59	=9
Birmingham City University	94.2	6	65.7	5
Chester	95.8	4	65.1	6
Coventry	94.4	6	67.5	3
Gloucestershire	96.8	=2	64.2	7
Liverpool Hope	97.3	1	-	-
Northampton	93.8	8	59.5	8
Staffordshire	91.9	11	69	1
UWE, Bristol	94.0	7	66.1	4
Wolverhampton	91.2	=12	60.9	8
Worcester	93.7	9	68.2	2

[Mean: 68.63

Max:	90.6
Min	50.95]

The Physical Environment

26. An outstanding student experience extends beyond learning and teaching and clearly the physical environment in which students study and live is extremely important. This is an area which has been afforded a high level of priority in recent years, recognising that the University's estate was in need of modernising and enhancing.
27. Some of the achievements include:
- By the end of this summer's work 50% of all classrooms will have been completely modernised; all that are suitable have modern AV equipment
 - There has been significant investment in the Pierson Library and in the IT infrastructure – growth in number of PCs, wireless campus, etc. Improved NSS scores for Learning Resources
 - Improvements in residences have taken place and many more are planned.
 - The most recent NSS showed some improvement in efficiency of the timetable but still an area of concern. This should improve with further refurbishment in summer 2008/9 and acquisition of Regency High and Hylton Garage.
28. There are issues which are frequently raised by the student body and which the University recognises must be addressed if it is to achieve its objective of offering an outstanding student experience. These include improvements to dining and social facilities, upgrading of the Students' Union, and for many part time students improved car parking facilities.

A vibrant Students' Union

29. Although we should recognise that for many students the Students' Union may not be a high priority for fulltime undergraduate students it remains a central part of the student experience. The Union at Worcester is a very active one especially in the context of clubs and activities and in the 2007/08 session 1046 students participated in a wide range of activities and indications are that this will be even higher in the current session. Another useful indicator is participation in elections of sabbatical officers and at Worcester this was at more than 11% in 2009, considerably above that at many other institutions.

Conclusion

30. It is hoped that this report will help the Board measure the extent to which the University is meeting its strategic objective in this area. It is clear that there are a number of indicators that the student experience at Worcester is a good one but equally there are a number of areas that have been identified that will repay further effort if the University is to assure itself that the student experience is truly outstanding.