

Learning and Teaching Strategy 2017-2022



University of
Chester

Introduction

The *Learning and Teaching Strategy 2017-2022* has three main functions; to communicate the University's aims and aspirations in relation to Teaching and Learning; to identify a strategic approach to achieving that vision; and provide guidance on supporting and delivering the *Strategy*. The intention is to guide the development of rich, imaginative and creative educational experiences and enable staff and students to achieve their potential in an inclusive, people oriented and imaginative environment underpinned by partnership, dialogue and mutual respect. The *Strategy* is designed to be inclusive, continuing to enhance student and staff learning and teaching as the University develops in new disciplinary areas and provides higher education for an increasingly diverse student population. It builds on the University's reputation for excellence in teaching and its capacity for continued enhancement of the student experience across a rich diversity of contexts and disciplines.

Our approach to Learning and Teaching is underpinned by the University's three Foundational Values;

- The dignity and worth of each individual
- The vital role of education in the service of society
- The inherent value of the pursuit of truth and freedom of enquiry and expression.



Our Aims

Working together we shall seek to achieve the following aims and aspirations;

- Enable academic success and personal and professional development through inspirational teaching, transformational learning, and imaginative assessment
- Understand the needs and expectations of all our students to promote and develop inclusive curricula
- Engage all members of the University community in ensuring that the highest academic standards are consistently set, clearly communicated and effectively maintained
- Develop academic programmes supported by high quality research, focused scholarship, and innovative practice, and delivered by professionally recognised staff
- Provide appropriate learning environments, physical, digital, tangible and remote, to future proof learning, and reflect industry expectations, professional standards and staff and student needs
- Work in partnership with students, ensuring that the student voice is heard in the development and enhancement of curriculum, and creative approaches to learning, teaching and assessment
- Advance strategic partnerships between academics, industry, educational institutions and the work place to enhance curriculum recognising student expectation and raising aspiration and achievement.

Our Strategy

This Learning and Teaching strategy has been developed in alignment with the University Corporate Plan, Vision 2020 Altogether Better, acknowledging a changing Higher Education landscape and informed by relevant external and internal research findings and experiences and through consultation with a wide range of colleagues and students. Through its implementation, we seek to enable all students to achieve their potential through supporting successful progression, raising levels of achievement, enhancing graduate attributes and graduate employment opportunities and preparing for further study.

To realise the University's aims and aspirations we will concentrate on the following key priorities

- 1** Strengthening our use and analysis of outcomes and trends in Transition, Progression and Achievement
- 2** Promoting innovation, imagination and creativity in the design, content and delivery of inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- 3** Developing and enhancing of Partnership activity, with students, academia, industry and the community
- 4** Embedding of Academic and Employability skills in the curriculum
- 5** Providing and supporting pedagogic and discipline specific staff development opportunities
- 6** Delivering appropriate Learning Environments - both the enhancement of physical accommodation for extant and new provision, and support for the development of individual digital capabilities.

Operating the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2017-2022

The following provides guidance on how the key priorities may be interpreted and evaluated at a local level

Transition - In seeking to enable successful transition at all levels from initial induction through to employment and with an emphasis on Level 3 to Level 4, we will

- Develop supportive approaches to accessing the curriculum that understand the complexity of admissions routes available to students and the previous learning and assessment approaches students may have experienced
- Embed relevant academic skills in the curriculum at each level
- Support students through each level of transition through effective induction and refresher activities/information
- Provide support services that complement academic study in pursuit of the holistic development of self
- Ensure that learning, teaching and assessment strategies support the inclusion and successful outcomes of diverse student groups.

Progression and Success – in seeking to enhance student achievement and using a full range of analytical tools, we will

- Benchmark ourselves against relevant sector and university expectations in terms of retention, progression, academic attainment, employability and student satisfaction for example, identifying and sharing good practice and targeting areas for development
- Utilise the Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement process (CME) to assist in identifying, planning and supporting enhancements in learning and teaching and student achievement
- Review annually methods of teaching learning and assessment in line with module and programme needs and outcomes
- Recognise through structured intervention, the active pastoral and academic benefits of a supportive Personal Academic Tutor system (PAT), and provide every undergraduate with a PAT.

In seeking greater and deeper student engagement with curriculum through imaginative approaches to Teaching, Learning and Assessment, we will

- Ensure that the classroom experience remains a significant essential point of contact
- Provide a level of academic challenge for students (for example) through engagement with theoretical and practical concepts and constructs of significance and appropriate difficulty and including developments at the forefront of research, scholarship and/or practice
- Make effective and creative use of on-line learning spaces and technology supported learning to support and enhance classroom/workshop based activity
- Include formative learning experiences and appropriate and timely feedback in preparation for summative assessments at each stage of development
- Ensure that curriculum content is inclusive and free from cultural bias and stereotyping
- Design programmes that require and enable the development of digital capabilities, i.e. “those capabilities which fit an individual for living, learning and working in a digital society”.





Partnership – to challenge, inform, enhance and ensure the currency and quality of our programme design and delivery, we will

- Ensure and evidence that the student voice is integral to decision making processes at all levels and across the University.
- Work openly and positively with students to enhance teaching, learning and assessment practices
- Develop links and engage meaningfully with relevant individuals, external agencies and organisations and the community.

Employability – in seeking to develop graduate skills and enhance students' graduate employment opportunities we will

- Embed in our programme design the development of discipline specific, transferable and critical thinking skills
- Consider how key personal and professional attributes such as ethical and sustainable approaches, entrepreneurship, and corporate and social responsibility are recognized and developed within the curriculum
- Encourage and support staff and students to engage with the university's volunteering scheme and Students' Union led academic societies
- Provide and support international exchange, study/work abroad and Work-Based/ Experiential Learning opportunities for undergraduate students (other than through specific exemption)
- Develop links with relevant individuals, external agencies, organisations and the community.

Staff Development in support of teaching and learning – in seeking to support professional practice and professional development, inform curriculum and introduce appropriate academic challenge, we will

- Encourage and support the pursuit of qualifications, appropriate academic development and professional recognition that informs high quality teaching, research and scholarly activity
- Encourage and support discipline and/ or professionally related development and Continuing Professional Development that further enhances industry links and currency of thinking
- Encourage and support the use of inclusive teaching practices throughout the academic curriculum
- Continue to increase the awareness of equality and diversity and related issues (such as unconscious bias) of teaching staff and their confidence to deal with diversity.

Developing Appropriate Learning Environments – in seeking to provide learning environments necessary for the delivery of high quality Higher Education in the 21 Century, we will

- Support all students and staff to develop individual Digital Capabilities
- Enhance our online and virtual IT infrastructure to support teaching, learning and assessment
- Enable inclusive learning and teaching through the development of accessible ICT and the use of assistive technologies
- Develop relevant tools (such as data analytics) to support colleagues in the monitoring and enhancement student engagement, attainment and satisfaction
- Develop and enhance inclusive physical resource and accommodation in support of teaching, learning, assessment, research and knowledge transfer activities.

See (http://repository.jisc.ac.uk/6239/1/Digital_capabilities_six_elements.pdf)

Monitoring and Evaluation

Each University of Chester Programme will undertake programme level Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement (CME) referring directly to the relevant precepts of this strategy.

Each department should make it clear in the Department Monitoring Report its approach to supporting programme level action plans relating to learning, teaching and assessment outlined in each CME. Department Monitoring Reports should also capture the enhancement activities which fall within the scope of this Learning and Teaching Strategy.

Each Faculty reporting directly to AQEC through its Faculty Overview will identify common themes and actions taken to support the enhancement of its provision in respect of teaching, learning and assessment practices.

Support departments should review and enhance their activities with reference, where relevant, to the stated aims and the strategic approach outlined in the Learning and Teaching Strategy. Feedback from such reviews should inform the work of the Learning and Teaching Sub Committee and Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee as appropriate.

The Strategy will be reviewed annually at the second meeting of the Learning and Teaching Sub Committee to ensure the continuing currency of its objectives, the relevance of its approach, and the use all available evidence of impact in meeting the University's aims.





Further use and application

The Key Priorities that form the strategy also provide a basis for programme and module design and development and should also be used by departments and Boards of Study as a basis for programme and module level review and enhancement.

Whilst management and delivery of programmes, especially in relation to domestic and overseas Partner Institutions and Associate Colleges, may necessitate local interpretations of the guidance, it is expected that the key priorities outlined in this strategy apply equally to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment of all students of the University of Chester irrespective of the level of study, mode of delivery, location and characteristics of learners. Departments and programmes may develop locally derived Learning and Teaching Strategies that clearly align the requirements of outlined here with department priorities and initiatives.

Relationship to other university strategies

The Learning and Teaching Strategy 2017-2020 is not an isolated document. It should be seen as a complimentary strategy informing, and being informed by other related approaches and strategies in particular;

- The Research and Knowledge Transfer Strategy
- The Student Engagement Strategy
- The Equality and Diversity Charter
- Widening Participation Strategy (Access Agreement)
- Careers and Employability Strategy
- Partnerships and International Strategy.



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