

CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

LEARNING, TEACHING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY 2015-20



The most valuable possession is knowledge

Introduction

The delivery of a high quality and flexible student learning experience remains at the core of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. The University will respond to an increasingly competitive global higher education market through investment in extending its capacity for and use of technology enhanced learning, and in refreshing its portfolio of programmes. Underpinning this will be a rational, systematic curriculum that facilitates flexible learning, incorporates education for sustainable development and global citizenship, and which facilitates transnational education (TNE).

Our students tell us that securing graduate-level employment is a high priority and, as such, employability is central to this Strategy. It signals an increased emphasis upon systematically cohering all elements of employability provision, providing opportunities for students to build their confidence and attributes, and ensuring that Cardiff Met continues to develop mutually beneficial relationships with business and industry, both in the UK and internationally.

More broadly, this Strategy represents a continuation and finessing of a well-established approach to learning, teaching and assessment that is founded upon high-quality academic standards; working in partnership with students; active learning; work experience, voluntary and outward mobility; global citizenship; and research-informed teaching. Our objective is to develop creative, resilient and sought-after graduates with aptitudes, skills and experiences that will enable them to impact on their chosen profession or pathway.

This approach has proven successful and, in recent years, has resulted in the University:

- Improving the timeliness and quality of feedback to students.
- Enhancing the professional standards of staff.
- Promoting a framework for students' acquisition of clearly defined graduate attributes.
- Developing tools to audit programmes and provide advice to programme teams in the areas of sustainability and internationalisation.
- Providing multiple opportunities for students to contribute to decision making forums.
- Increasing the number of students undertaking some element of their programme through the medium of Welsh.
- Fostering social learning networks to support the integration of international and cross-cultural perspectives.
- Increasing the number of students participating in international mobility.

The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy provides a framework to enable the University to maintain this momentum, to be responsive to the changing higher education environment and to demonstrate best practice in learning and teaching.

Develop attractive, relevant and sustainable programmes and curricula

At the centre of students' University experience is their satisfaction with, and the effectiveness of, their academic programmes. The continuous review, monitoring and quality enhancement of our current and future portfolio of programmes will ensure that the University's offering maintains its relevance to prospective and current students, and appeals to UK, EU, overseas and TNE audiences. Portfolio review will also enable the University to develop more flexible structures and delivery modes will support the inclusive, effective and efficient delivery of learning, teaching and assessment. Our newly revised programme design and programme review processes will provide the means to ensure that programmes benefit from advances in pedagogic practice and incorporate valuable feedback from key stakeholders such as students and employers.

We will develop each student's capacity to learn by enquiry through professionally relevant and research-enriched curricula that draw on both pedagogic and subject research. As employers require that graduates demonstrate the skills of intellectual adaptability, analysis and enquiry we will expect students to learn about research findings and processes and to be actively engaged in research and inquiry-based activities.

Internationalisation and sustainability in the curriculum will be monitored and enhanced using the innovative evaluation tools developed by the University. These themes will be extended by providing students with opportunities to develop an international perspective at all levels of their programme and further opportunities for overseas placements and internships will equip our students to compete in the global marketplace.

We are committed to providing an inclusive learning environment that caters for a diverse student body. The increased mobility and diversity of the student population will require that we examine the potential of alternative and more flexible modes of delivery including accelerated, extended and part-time study, work-based, distance and various forms of blended learning. The University's capacity delivering through the medium of Welsh will take account of demand and the sustainability of provision.

The development of our programmes will be continuously informed by an active approach to obtaining student feedback and the further development of partnership work with students will enhance the learning and teaching experience.

Provide a high quality and student-centred learning experience

The New Consumer Rights Bill is expected to have a significant impact upon the higher education sector, and there is already some evidence that students have an increasingly consumerist ethos towards higher education and want 'value-for-money'. (Kandiko & Mawer, 2013)¹. This is seen tangibly through demands for sufficient contact hours and resources. Equally there are demands for clearer and more transparent information about

¹ Kandiko, C. B. & Mawer, M. (2013). Student Expectations and Perceptions of Higher Education: Executive Summary. London: King's Learning Institute.

courses, including information regarding the future career opportunities that successful course completion will offer.

These rising student expectations have seen employability playing an increasingly important role. Enhancing the employability of our graduates is a University-wide responsibility and our provision to support employability related aims must be considered holistically, and is a key factor that integrates the University's academic and non-academic strategies. Our Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy focuses on embedding employability in the curriculum and fostering a culture of progression and life-long learning. We will ensure that all programmes offered by the University promote students' acquisition of clearly defined graduate attributes by making graduate attributes integral to the design of programmes and to programme review.

Careers preparation and advice will be available to students in a variety of forms, and personal development planning tools will assist students in making connections between their career intentions and their learning, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Pedagogic practices, careers preparation and work experience aimed at enhancing employability will feed a record of achievements through the Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) for individual students.

Recent years have seen rapid change in the technology landscape and this also influences student expectations. For example the *NMC Horizon Report (2014)* identified the integration of online, hybrid, and collaborative learning and the growing ubiquity of social media as trends driving changes in higher education. Technology will continue to play a key role in university education, offering the opportunity to enhance the learning experience and improve efficiency. Our growing technological capacity will progressively impact upon the way programmes are delivered as students increasingly expect to be able to access their work online at any time and from any location and expect a wide range of programme resources to be available digitally. To meet these expectations and to enhance learning we will need to combine the best of traditional teaching and learning with the benefits of technology enhanced learning. We will continue to expect students to be responsible for their own learning – technology will be used to facilitate not control learning.

We already have a sound foundation from which to extend our adoption of learning technology. For example, during our transition to a Moodle based platform, all the University's academic staff have undertaken staff development in the effective use of virtual learning. However it is widely recognised that to fully realise the benefits of learning technology requires significant transformation in the way we approach learning, teaching and assessment. This Strategy will support the further development of our virtual learning environment together with the adoption of those learning technologies that have the capacity to strengthen the achievement of our priorities for learning teaching and assessment. An informed use of lecture capture software will contribute to the enhancement of our students' learning experience by supporting flexible and productive learning approaches including 'flipped classroom' teaching and opportunities for individual recap. Also, the increased use of e-portfolio tools will enhance students' capacity to prepare for their future by providing a transportable place to record and reflect upon their professional growth.

Students rightly expect clear and accurate information about their academic programme. The development of comparable sets of information about programmes is exemplified in requirements to provide Key Information Sets (KIS) containing items of information that prospective students have identified as most important to inform their decisions. Whilst the University currently has a rigorous process to gather KIS data we need to invest in electronic mechanisms to organise programme and curriculum information. Such mechanisms will not only allow greater efficiency in the collection of KIS data they will provide a vehicle to improve communication about programmes and to increase collaboration across programmes.

Enhance the professional standards and skills of staff

The University's established CPD scheme for teaching staff and staff who support teaching provides opportunities for staff to engage with the Professional Standards Framework (PSF) and to gain recognition for their professionalism through Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA). We will continue to support staff in gaining recognition and this will enable the University to further enhance the quality of teaching and to recognize excellence in learning and teaching. A higher profile will be given to meeting the PSF through Performance Review. The extension of our support to collaborative partners will also widen the opportunities for recognition.

In addition to these opportunities to gain recognition for meeting the PSF academic staff will be able to acquire valuable feedback and peer-review of their teaching through their engagement with the University's revised Peer Learning and Development Scheme and will also be encouraged to achieve other teaching quality indicators such as Student-Led Teaching Fellowship awards and National Teaching Fellowship awards.

Given the strategic aim to develop technology enhanced learning there will be a particular focus on supporting academic staff in enhancing their digital literacy skills. The University wishes to create an environment in which:

- Staff meet minimum standards of digital literacy and use of technology.
- Staff are confident about integrating technology into their teaching.
- The use of technology is underpinned by sound pedagogy.
- Skills are developed through CPD aligned with the UK Professional Standards Framework.
- Practice is informed by case studies/best practice, peer learning/observation, collaboration with colleagues, and feedback from students and employers.
- The deployment of technology enhanced learning recognises the needs and circumstances of different disciplines.

It is expected that all programmes will provide at least the following through Moodle by 2015-16:

- Module/programme handbook.
- Tutor information and contact details.

- A brief welcome message.
- Lecture notes, reading or other preparatory materials in advance of scheduled teaching sessions.

It is anticipated that by 2019-20 all lecturing staff will regularly use Moodle to support a broad format of technology enhanced learning mechanisms/techniques. These could include, but are not limited to, the following generic categories:

- Electronic assignments and feedback.
- Audio/visual content.
- On-line and collaborative research.
- Learner analytics.
- Lecture capture.
- On-line forums and peer review.
- Electronic portfolios.

The Strategy is composed of three aims, each of which has a limited number of associated key objectives:

AIM	ASSOCIATED OBJECTIVES
1. Develop attractive, relevant and sustainable programmes and curricula	A portfolio that attracts highly motivated and able students, which provide flexible learning opportunities, and promotes social inclusion
	Ensure that curriculum design and delivery is research-informed
	Promote employability, internationalisation, and global citizenship/sustainability through curriculum design and renewal
2. Provide a high quality and student-centred learning experience	Promote students' acquisition of clearly defined graduate attributes
	Improve the scope and consistency of careers preparation and advice
	Extend the University's capacity for and use of technology enhanced learning
	Communicate more effectively with students in relation to the content of programmes & curricula, and the organisation and management of delivery
	Enhance the quality and timeliness of academic feedback
	Work in partnership with students to enhance quality and improve delivery
3. Enhance the professional standards and skills of staff	Promote the UK Professional Standards Framework
	Accelerate the application of digital literacy skills

Each theme is accompanied by:

- a) A contextual summary.
- b) A small number of key targets.
- c) A description of the primary mechanisms that will be used to facilitate the achievement of the targets.

The Strategy is supported by an Action Plan which will be refreshed on an annual basis.

1. Develop attractive, relevant & sustainable programmes and curricula

Aim 1 – Develop attractive, relevant & sustainable programmes and curricula	
Objective	Target
A portfolio that attracts highly motivated and able students, which provide flexible learning opportunities, and which promotes social inclusion	100 students to be enrolled on new programmes delivered at Cardiff campuses by 2017-18, and 500 by 2019-20
Ensure curriculum design and delivery is research-informed	Average UCAS tariff of degree entrants to increase from 314 (2014 entry) to 320 by 2017-18, and to 325 by 2019-20
Promote and embed employability, internationalisation, equality & diversity and global citizenship & sustainability through curriculum design and renewal	At least one third of young full-time first degree entrants to be from NS-SEC classes 4, 5, 6 & 7 annually At least 20% of Welsh domiciled students to be from the bottom quintile of wards in Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation or in Communities First cluster areas

The University will primarily, but not exclusively, achieve the objective and targets through:

- 1) Developing new academic programmes and strengthening existing programmes through the use of:
 - Market research and business intelligence
 - Student, professional body and employer/feedback
 - Programme design
 - Periodic review
 - Annual programme review
 - Disseminating good practice and providing advice, guidance, and support.
- 2) Standardising and simplifying the content of information held on curricula, and improving the systems used to store and deploy curricula information.
- 3) Deploying workload allocation and performance review
- 4) Promoting higher education learning opportunities to - and supporting the learning of - under-represented and disadvantaged communities, where relevant in collaboration with other organisations
- 5) Developing Welsh medium provision where there is evident demand and sufficient resources to ensure delivery on a sustainable basis.

2. Provide a high quality and student-centred learning experience

Aim 2 - Provide a high quality and student-centred learning experience	
Objective	Target
Promote students' acquisition of clearly defined graduate attributes	Increase the retention of full-time undergraduate students in the year following entry from 87% (2013-14 entrants) to 90% by 2017-18, and to 92% by 2019-20
Improve the scope and consistency of careers preparation and advice	
Extend the University's capacity for and use of technology enhanced learning	Retention rates amongst under represented students to be within 80% of the overall rate by 2017-18, and within 90% by 2019-20
Communicate more effectively with students in relation to the content of programmes & curricula, and the organisation and management of delivery.	Increase the proportion of graduates achieving a 1 st class or upper 2 nd class degree from 59% (2013-14 leavers) to 70% by 2017-18, and to 75% by 2019-20
Enhance the quality and timeliness of academic feedback	Increase the overall rate of student employability from 94% (2013-14 leavers) to 95% by 2016-17, and to at least maintain that level in future years Increase the rate of graduate employability from 69% (2013-14 leavers) to 70% by 2016-17, and to 75% by 2019-20 Increase the overall rate of undergraduate student satisfaction from 86% (2014 survey) to 87% by 2017-18, and to 88% by 2019-20
Work in partnership with students to enhance quality and improve delivery	

The University will primarily, but not exclusively, achieve the objectives and targets through:

1. Using programme design, periodic review and annual programme review to enhance the effectiveness of content and delivery. This will involve developing the concept of 'the Cardiff Met Graduate' and embedding of identified graduate attributes within programme delivery.
2. Evaluating and taking appropriate action in relation to student feedback encompassing but not limited to:
 - Student involvement in quality review processes
 - The National Student Survey
 - The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey
 - The Student Engagement Survey

- The Student Experience Survey
 - Student Withdrawal surveys.
3. Developing web-based and electronic mechanisms (& where relevant effective pedagogic practice) for organising and delivering teaching, learning and assessment encompassing but not limited to:
 - Programme and curriculum information
 - Technology enhanced learning, in particular Moodle as the University's Learning Management System, including the electronic capture of lectures
 - The provision of processes and systems to facilitate student reflection on their learning and recording their achievements, in particular the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)
 - Submission of student assessments and the provision of feedback
 - Communications with students.
 4. Flexible approaches to student learning encompassing but not limited to:
 - Work-based learning
 - Recognition of prior learning
 - Accreditation of online learning
 - Technology enhanced learning
 - Student mobility, work placements & volunteering opportunities.
 5. Support and advice services for students encompassing but not limited to:
 - Student induction
 - Personal tutorial support
 - Student advisory and welfare services, in particular working in partnership with Cardiff Met Student Union to deliver integrated career preparation advice
 - The Financial Contingency Fund.
 6. Investing in learning resources, facilities and spaces.

3. Enhance the professional standards and skills of staff

Aim 3 - Enhance the professional standards and skills of staff	
Objective	Target
Promote the UK Professional Standards Framework	Increase the proportion of eligible academic staff who are professionally recognised by the Higher Education Academy from 79% in 2013-14 to 85% by 2017-18, and to 100% by 2019-20
Accelerate the application of digital literacy skills	Increase the proportion of eligible academic staff who are Senior Fellows or Principal Fellows of the Higher Education Academy from 5% in 2013-14 to 10% by 2017-18, and to 15% by 2019-20 All programmes and modules to comply with the VLE minimum requirements established by the University by 2017-18, and to progress progressively to advanced use thereafter

The University will primarily, but not exclusively, achieve the objectives and targets through:

- 1) Mechanisms for supporting staff development encompassing but not limited to:
 - The Postgraduate Certificate Teaching in Higher Education Matrix
 - The Peer Learning and Development Scheme
 - Supporting staff gaining Higher Education Academy recognition for meeting the Professional Standards Framework
 - Supporting staff applications to the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme
 - The dissemination of good practice, guidance & support
 - Performance review.
- 2) Mechanisms for recognising and celebrating staff achievement encompassing but not limited to:
 - Staff awards
 - Student-led teaching fellowships.