Learning & Teaching Strategy
Learning & Teaching Plans and Operational Planning

The final version of the Learning & Teaching strategy, part of the overall University Strategy for 2017 is attached for information. As part of the University Strategy this was approved by Court at its meeting on 3 September 2012.

The Deputy Principal will lead discussions on how College academic planning and enhancement activities – including the formulation of Learning and Teaching Enhancement Reports – can best feed into future operational planning.

Further discussion, and input from Committee members, is required on the related retention and widening participation strategies.
University Strategy to 2017

Enabling Strategy: Learning and Teaching

Summary
We are an inclusive community of scholars and learners, creating a culture of achievement; committed to excellence; working together with our students at every level and in every form of learning, focusing on high quality, high value outcomes in an atmosphere of world-class research, aiming for local and global impact.

Context
The Learning and Teaching Supporting Strategy concentrates on a variety of ideas, and more detailed aims and sub-aims. For those to be of value, we need to have a clearer view of where we want to go.

Where do we sit as a University? We have strong research success in some areas, and recognised contributions to Learning and Teaching, but the two do not always correlate very well – our areas of research success are not always excellent as learning places; other areas are recognised for their teaching, but do not, and perhaps should not, have a wide success in research. If our aspiration is to be a small, research intensive institution which uses that research strength to inform its learning, recognised as a significant contributor to society globally, then we need to look at how resources can be best deployed to support that. We are not trying to be a ‘full service’ University, covering all areas at the same level: we should concentrate on those areas where we have, or are developing, strength. For the modern graduate, that means we also have to develop and support areas which will not of themselves be strong research areas, but will contribute to the excellence in learning and teaching, and the university experience, which suits the segmented market in which we work, and helps support the graduate attributes identified through local and national work over the past few years.

Working across disciplinary boundaries, breadth and integration are features of successful research, and reflect our success in applied and translational areas – where we share discoveries in one area to allow innovation in others, and apply our research more directly. We need to learn from this in our learning and teaching, and recognise that, where there is excellence in our teaching, we should find ways of sharing that, and learning from it, in areas where we need to develop our learning and teaching approach: a thematic approach where the subject discipline boundary is less important than the pedagogic approaches we think are needed to enable our students to succeed. The aims and sub-aims of the supporting strategy are directed at enabling this change.

Vision
We believe that our students will shape the world in which they live, not simply fit in to pre-defined roles carrying out pre-defined skills. We know that the world our students will live in is vastly different to the one we know today, and that the world when they retire will be largely unrecognisable to those who have taught them. Former notions of national boundaries are changing, and disciplinary boundaries are disappearing – to our students they have already disappeared – to be replaced by more collaboration, less formality, greater flexibility, and more openness.

We work in partnership: with students, employers and with local, national and international institutions, to ensure a smooth and stimulating learning journey, which supports and challenges;
developing partnerships of equals for exchange and mutual benefit, because we are part of a global community, and need to work in a multicultural world.

The education our students receive will be high quality, internationally focused, a transformational experience informed by research, and offering a breadth and depth of experience, preparing students for leadership and global citizenship. It is the beginning, not the end of their learning journey.

That is why our new strategy embraces the ethos of partnership, global vision, interdisciplinary breadth and specialist depth across all programmes, tailored to professional contexts across our Schools and Colleges.

This will be realised through:

- Focusing on partnerships
- Enhancing flexibility and curriculum review
- Investing in and valuing staff of all grades
- Embedding breadth, depth, employability and the global view, within sustainable curricula
- Recognising the diverse backgrounds our students come from and providing flexible approaches to preparing them for our research-led programmes
- Supporting students so they can benefit from the formal and informal learning experiences we will provide
- Ensuring Dundee is the destination of choice for students who wish to impact on their chosen fields.

Review of the previous Strategic Framework
We achieved many of the aims in the last Strategic Framework, however:

- We still largely rely on local entry, and are not yet achieving the level of growth in unregulated and overseas students which we would like to have. Increasing diversity in this way would help to broaden the horizons of our whole student body, and thereby increase their employability, as well as supporting the financial headroom we need.
- While students value coming here on exchange, our efforts to do the reverse have not been very successful.
- Likewise while our use of e-learning technologies, and employability initiatives are successful in themselves, the impact on the whole student body is low
- Employability figures are not as good as we would like – we are still not providing the kind of experience that gives all our students the edge, whether that is about professionalism, exposure to different ways of thinking, or development of generic and subject specific skills, embedded in our curricula.
- We are good at working with local schools, but our progression statistics and widening access provision are poor. In part, this is because learners exit early, suggesting we do not take proper account of the individual learner journey, and where it should start and stop.
- Our student satisfaction is high and recognised, but others have caught up, and the NSS suggests we have significant work to do in the area of assessment and feedback, and in our organisational abilities.
- While we are getting better at recognising excellence in learning and teaching via our learning and teaching awards and the introduction of award winners as speakers at the annual Discovery Days event, we are still not giving it the priority it deserves, nor rewarding the excellence through promotion, both for academic and support staff.
• There are still significant gaps in the area of postgraduate activity, and in the integration of Student Operations, in terms of support and success, and we need to think deeply about how we can address these issues to make sure that the learning experience, both formal and informal, supports students at all levels to get the best out of their association with the University of Dundee.

**Aim 1** Our graduates and postgraduates make an impact in their chosen fields, with the skills and knowledge to shape and lead society in the professions, research, and the wider world.

**Sub Aim 1.1** We will regularly review and reflect on the structure, content and enhancement of our taught programmes at all levels to make sure that they meet the needs of current and future graduates, the demands of the professions, and the requirements for employment and life in a global society.

*PI LT 1 (KPI 1): Overall student satisfaction*

**Sub Aim 1.2** We will improve and develop our postgraduate provision, ensuring sustainability, developing our postgraduate student support systems, and aligning our provision to support our research strengths.

**Sub Aim 1.3** We will embed graduate attributes and ideas of global and social sustainability into curricula so that all students will benefit from them in developing their personal futures, while providing greater opportunities for internships, work-placement experiences and employability skill development. (See also Employability).

*PI LT 2: Number of programmes using attribute mapping to enhance their curriculum*

**Sub Aim 1.4** We will identify overseas partners for collaborative and partnership approaches which will increase the number of local students studying abroad. Through inward exchanges our local students will experience the global view. (See also Internationalisation)

**Sub Aim 1.5** All parts of the University community, including Dundee University Student Association, the Institute of Sport and Exercise, the Library and Learning Centre, Student Operations will ensure that the non-academic, informal environment is as much a part of the learning experience as formal teaching.

**Sub Aim 1.6** We will develop support systems and academic tutoring and advisory procedures to help all students to make full use of appropriate academic and pastoral support, through all the routes available.

*PI LT 3: Progression rates across all years*  
*PI LT 4 (KPI 2): Undergraduate learning and teaching added value*
Aim 2  Our curricula are designed for breadth and depth allowing for experimentation, change and diversity: breadth to recognise the need for our graduates to experience inter- and cross-disciplinary learning; and depth, because our graduates need to develop critical enquiry and deep thinking skills, enabling them to have open minds to challenge problems.

Sub Aim 2.1  We will enhance our learning and teaching approaches and practices through rigorous and appropriate assessment and feedback systems, recognising that these areas are the most likely to make a significant difference to the success of our graduates and to their satisfaction with the student experience.

PI LT 5:  Student satisfaction with assessment and feedback, and organisation and management.

Sub Aim 2.2  We will promote and learn from pedagogic research within and between disciplines so that our teaching is informed by the latest thinking and, in turn, contributes to the global understanding of how students learn.

Sub Aim 2.3  We will actively engage with all the appropriate Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies to ensure the excellence and enhancement of our provision within regulated frameworks to enable all our learners to benefit from our evidence-based Quality Enhancement approach.

Sub Aim 2.4  We will further develop inter- and cross-disciplinary approaches to our programmes that mirror the research excellence taking place across traditional boundaries, preparing graduates for the borderless world they will be working in.

Aim 3  We recognise and reward our academic excellence in learning and teaching publicly and through promotion. (See also Human Resources).

Sub Aim 3.1  We will develop a robust staff professional development framework to support staff engagement with the development, implementation and dissemination of good teaching practice across the University.

PI LT 6:  Academic Professional Development targets in School L&T plans.

Sub Aim 3.2  We will develop University procedures for the reward and promotional recognition of excellence in teaching and supporting learning, including significant contributions to the curriculum and to professional and disciplinary standards, and for excellence in the management of programmes and teaching teams, thereby recognising academic excellence through promotion.

PI LT 7:  Numbers promoted to Senior Lecturer/Professor
Aim 4  We seek to identify those with the highest potential to benefit from our courses, no matter the route they take. Our curricula recognise the variety of prior learning experiences of our students, and provide the flexibility to allow students to enter and leave their education with us at the most appropriate stage, while recognising their achievements.

Sub Aim 4.1  We will identify and recruit students who can most benefit from our vision in Learning and Teaching, supporting growth, and growing the excellence in learning and teaching across our themes

*PI LT 8 (KPI 3): Undergraduate entry qualifications for standard routes*

Sub Aim 4.2  We will work within Tayside and Fife to develop appropriate pathways, partnering with all the educational providers to create effective and efficient routes which recognise the individual learner

Sub Aim 4.3  We will develop alternative degree and other qualification paths, including 3 and 4 year degree options, and part-time opportunities, tailored to learners with different prior experience, while ensuring that they are fully part of the community of the University of Dundee

*PI LT 9: Number of students articulating into SCQF7 and above*

Sub Aim 4.4  We will further develop our admissions, induction and transition procedures, at all levels, to ensure that students who join us for study are set up for success, and are fully integrated into the University community

Sub Aim 4.5  We will develop a formal Widening Participation and Access strategy, using scholarships, bursaries, credit transfer and excellent student operational systems to enable those who are challenged by circumstance to access and benefit fully from their time at Dundee.

*PI LT 10: Number of students admitted from deprived areas or circumstances*

Aim 5  We will create a sustainable learning environment which exploits all the appropriate approaches and technologies, maximises income and ensures that all our students, in Dundee and elsewhere, are supported for success.

Sub Aim 5.1  We will review, reflect upon, and develop the learning environment to promote innovation and the development of best practice in e-learning and distance learning, embedding technology within the learning and teaching processes of the university, ensuring appropriate resource and support, and encouraging the individual development of our staff to do this.

Sub Aim 5.2  We will provide a supportive, learning environment, including providing resilient and reliable mechanisms to teach remotely, able to robustly support
distance and blended learning styles, and embedding digital literacies in our curricula where this is cost effective.

*PI LT 11: Income from distance/blended learning options*\(^{1}\)

Sub Aim 5.3  We will review teaching programme costs and reduce where appropriate.

Sub Aim 5.4  We will increase our learning and teaching provision in unregulated markets.

*PI LT 12 (KPI 4): Total unregulated learning and teaching income.*

\(^{1}\) ‘blended learning’ is defined here as requiring a mixture of face-to-face and distance learning approaches, i.e. some modules or parts of modules require the physical presence of the student in Dundee, or on another campus with Dundee staff, while other parts of the programme are offered at a distance, with a range of pedagogic approaches being used.

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Version 15/8/2012