Sheffield Hallam University

Learning and Teaching Strategy

Our ambition is to be one of the best universities for the quality of our teaching and learning, excelling in programmes that are academically challenging with an emphasis on professional practice.

Background and context

We will provide an excellent and inclusive educational experience for our students and through our learning and teaching they will be stimulated, presented with new challenges and perspectives and supported to succeed. Their student experience will be underpinned by excellent support services and facilities. Our students will experience digital resources and technologies that support their academic, professional and social development.

This ambition is contextualised in terms of external developments in teaching and learning, and the national student engagement and success agendas. This changing external higher education landscape; the changing needs of employers and the changing demands and expectations of our students necessitates a step change in the way the University supports the transition of students into and through its undergraduate and postgraduate provision and beyond. We need to provide students with an inclusive teaching experience of the highest quality which is inspiring, innovative, stimulating and challenging and which sets out clear expectations of and facilitates high levels of engagement with their learning. We need to prepare our graduates, irrespective of their geographical location or background, to live in and contribute responsibly to a globally interconnected society

To achieve these ambitions we will ensure that our academic staff, and those who support teaching, are of the highest quality and expertise, and are supported to build their capabilities to the full, stimulated through their engagement with professional practice, research and scholarship. We will explore and harness the potential of technology to enhance learning and improve the efficacy of the student learning experience. Further we will optimise the use of the University's physical and virtual spaces to create the conditions which foster a sense of course identity, for staff and students, and help build vibrant learning communities. All of this is set within the context of a rigorous approach to academic quality and standards.

Learning and Teaching Propositions

This context and our vision to be recognised by 2020 as a leading UK university known for the excellence of our teaching and student experience with highly satisfied students, highlights the importance of an evolution in the educational experience of our students. This evolution is founded on the following propositions:

1. We will be known for the excellence of our teaching and student learning experience delivered by professionally recognised and experienced academic staff who are continuously engaged in their professional development as teachers and are active as scholars in their subject discipline.

2. We will engage all our students in creative and inspiring learning experiences which are focused on the development of strong professional identities and the fostering of a sense of belonging to their course of study.

3. Our innovative, high quality, coherent courses will be designed with students, employers and Professional and Regulatory Bodies to be inclusive, facilitate student success, reflect the rapidly-changing external world, and equip our students with the knowledge and transferable skills needed to excel in their chosen professions and succeed as future-looking global citizens.

4. Our courses will systematically develop our students' skills and capabilities through their transition into and engagement with their course, transforming them as self-reliant, resilient, critical thinkers, able to work effectively in complex and ever-changing situations.

5. Our academic community will be characterised by strong connections between teaching, research and professional practice supporting our students to develop as research-informed practitioners and professionals.

6. Our learning community will be characterised by the pervasive use of technologies that facilitate both independent and collaborative approaches to learning and the confidence to move between technologies quickly where there is need or clear benefit, this will be underpinned by timely and flexible access to high quality learning resources and information.

7. We will develop inspiring and innovative learning spaces that are learner-centred, seamlessly combined with our virtual learning environment and which enable the academic identities of our staff and students to flourish.

Objectives

This strategy sets out the university-wide priorities that will help us to achieve these propositions. and is constructed around the four objectives set out for this ambition in the University Strategy to 2020: Providing high quality and popular programmes, Delivering outstanding teaching, Developing a culture of continuous improvement, and Providing an excellent infrastructure to support our teaching and learning. The strategy is designed to provide a clear steer to inform the development of detailed/specific plans within Faculties for the enhancement of the educational experience of their students. However it is recognised that it is the combined, integrated efforts at University and Faculty level that will ensure that the University achieves and sustains its ambitions.

The plans are structured around four main objectives:

1. Providing high quality and popular programmes.

2. Delivering outstanding teaching.

3. Developing a culture of continuous improvement.

4. Providing an excellent infrastructure to support our teaching and learning.

Objective 1

Providing high quality and popular programmes

Priorities and outcomes:

We will offer programmes that are informed by research and scholarship and which meet the demands of professional practice. They will challenge all students to meet the highest academic standards and will enable them to develop a full range of work-related, personal, and professional skills. There will be a strong focus on a relevant, up-to-date and applicable curriculum that is informed by and addresses current issues and anticipates the challenges of the future. We will be a sector leader in programmes designed with and for employers and the professions.

1. Ensuring that all our courses have a strong subject coherence and identity, are informed by good practice and research, and developed and reviewed in partnership with students, employers and professional, bodies by:

a. Ensuring that the future development of our courses is informed by key performance data, such as the NSS, pedagogic research into the student experience and data on learners and their activities.

b. Ensuring student input into course design, validation and quality review processes

c. Establishing appropriate mechanisms for employer engagement in portfolio and curriculum developments

2. Ensuring that all our courses are designed to facilitate student success and the transformation of students into future-looking graduates and:

a. Are inclusive and take a 'whole course view' of the student experience

b. Are enhanced by the strategic application of robust qualitative and quantitative data

c. Progressively challenge students to become capable and independently minded.

d. Are informed by and built on staff research, practice and scholarly activity

e. Provide students with a global perspective and develop intercultural skills.

f. Integrate the progressive development of academic and employability skills

3. Through implementation of the Assessment Journey Programme employ assessments that are appropriate to the subject, are accessible, effective and efficient and enhance opportunities for learning

4. Our courses will systematically develop our students' skills and capabilities through their transition into and engagement with their course, transforming them into self-reliant, resilient, critical thinkers, able to work effectively in complex and ever-changing situations by:

a. Capture and disseminate discipline specific case studies where students exemplify the graduate skills we want to emphasise

b. Extending opportunities for work-based learning or work-related learning in our provision and building on innovative practices such as the Venture Matrix

c. Making strong connections between academic advice, personal and professional development planning, career planning and preparation for employment

5. Supporting and engaging students in preparation for, and as they progress through, their programme of study.

a. Review and revise the Retention and Student Success Framework with a focus on transition.

b. Systematically analyse retention and attainment data to identify retention risk characteristics within our student profile and develop proactive interventions to support those students.

6. Develop strategies that ensure all students are successfully integrated into the university and their course, academically, socially and culturally and which foster a sense of belonging.

a. Further develop the Academic / Professional Advice system to support social, cultural and academic orientation and transition

b. Extend existing peer mentoring/peer assisted learning schemes as appropriate

c. Ensuring that the development of physical and virtual learning spaces fosters a sense of place and identity.

Objective 2

Delivering outstanding teaching

Priorities and outcomes:

Our teaching will be inspiring and challenging, delivered by professionally recognised, well-qualified and experienced academic staff. Staff will have enthusiasm and passion for their subject and commitment to their professional development. We will continue to work with students to identify inspirational teachers, and we will develop career paths based on recognition of teaching excellence, academic leadership and leading pedagogic practice. We will strengthen the links between research and teaching, thus contributing to a high quality academic environment and student experience.

1. Focusing on the quality of student contact so that students' engagement with staff and their peers, both in and outside of the classroom, is interactive through:

a. Using student feedback to identify and showcase examples of good practice

b. Developing resources to support staff in adopting teaching approaches which promote learner engagement

c. Providing development activities that encourage staff to adopt innovative teaching approaches that promote engagement with learning.

2. Ensuring that all teaching staff have a post graduate higher education teaching qualification or Fellowship of the HEA and engage routinely in development activities to maintain their academic standing as teachers in higher education by:

a. Extending current pathways to HEA accreditation and qualification to teach to provide a coherent, inclusive, programme of provision which includes post graduate students, associate lecturers and learning support staff.

b. Providing all teaching staff with access to resources and opportunities aligned to appraisal and the UK PSF that promote critical reflection and career planning.

3. Ensuring that all staff who support learning use feedback from students and peers to develop the quality and effectiveness of student learning, and promote critical reflection on academic practice. We will support this through:

a. Implementation of the new approach to Peer Review and Enhancement (PRE)

b. Establishing clear links between appraisal, professional development and peer review activity aligned to the UK PSF

c. Incorporating student feedback on teaching in module evaluation

4. Supporting all academic staff strive for teaching excellence through their engagement and commitment to scholarship and their professional development through:

a. Establish clear expectations and opportunities for staff engagement with CPD and scholarship through the Teaching Code of Practice.

b. Provide targeted CPD which links opportunities across the university aligned to UKPSF.

c. Extend development opportunities where staff can share, across subject disciplines, examples of innovation in learning and teaching

5. Recognising encouraging and supporting excellence in teaching and pedagogic innovation through:

a. Establishing career paths based on recognition of teaching excellence, academic leadership and leading pedagogic practice

b. Building on the success of and further develop the inspirational teaching awards

c. Establishing networks / communities of practice to promote leadership / pedagogic innovation

6. Strengthen the connections between teaching, research and professional practice.

7. Making full use of research into learning and teaching in Higher Education to inform and enhance practice, ensure evidence based decision making and to enhance the University's external reputation for higher education pedagogic research in collaboration with the Institute of Education.

Objective 3

Developing a culture of continuous improvement

Priorities and outcomes:

All academic and professional service departments will be engaged in continuous improvement and the sharing of good practice to ensure high quality performance and innovation. We will build a culture of connectedness that promotes positive staff-student feedback. Our services to support learning and teaching will be reliable, responsive, and enabling. We will work with our students and the Students' Union to understand students' needs, encourage contributions and learn from experiences, using feedback to inform our priorities for the future. We aim to have highly satisfied students.

1. **Ensuring that staff, as individuals or teams, are responsible and accountable for enhancing the educational experience of our students by:**

a. Setting clear expectations e.g. through the Teaching Code of Practice

b. Providing staff with the development support and information needed to identify and inform change.

2. **Ensuring that staff, as individuals or teams, work in partnership with students and others to identify and implement the transformations needed to improve the educational experience of students by:**

a. Developing and promoting a definition of student engagement with quality review and enhancement activities;

b. Promoting the opportunities available to students to participate in student engagement activities;

c. Providing guidance for staff to facilitate student engagement / respond to feedback Implement means to recognise and reward student contributions to enhancement

3. **Review and implement revised mechanisms for receiving, using and responding to feedback from students by:**

a. Developing and implementing a Surveys Strategy;

b. Implementing university wide module (and course) evaluation and integrating them into the quality review cycle;

c. Enhancing existing, and developing, new means to communicate to students improvements resulting from their feedback;

4. **Review and implement changes to the student representative system to ensure effective representation at all levels of the University.**

5. **Ensuring that staff, as individuals or in teams, are provided with information necessary to support them to continuously improve the educational experience of students by:**

a. Developing reporting tools necessary to ensure student information, survey data and other types of feedback from students is easily accessible and facilitates staff engagement;

b. Providing guidance to facilitate the student voice feeding into quality review and enhancement processes

Objective 4

Providing an excellent infrastructure to support learning and teaching

Priorities and outcomes:

We will provide excellent learning and information resources, specialist laboratory and practice space and flexible learning spaces. We will develop our digital resources to pursue new developments in learning and teaching. We will advance our virtual learning environment, e-learning tools and mobile learning technologies to provide a modern, inclusive, efficient, flexible and engaging learning environment for our students. Our estate will be developed to reflect shifts in patterns of learning and will be designed to provide students with a sense of identity, belonging and engagement.

1. **Taking a strategic view of the development of our learning spaces and provide opportunities to share experiences between projects, and external developments.**

a. Supporting the development of innovative pedagogies that use space and technology imaginatively

b. Establishing exemplar learning spaces that support and encourage innovation in learning and teaching

c. Developing and sharing our understandings and practice in the use of learning spaces'

d. Undertaking research into new innovative conceptions of learning spaces and digital innovation

2. **Developing our learning spaces so that they engender a sense of place, belonging and pride in the academic achievements of our staff and students and enable close co-operative working between staff and students by:**

a. Defining and disseminating a vision for future learning spaces that reflects a move toward learner-centred environments

b. Ensuring new and refurbished spaces meet future expectations for innovation in learning and teaching

c. Putting in place a programme of staff development to support the innovative use of learning spaces

d. Evaluating the impact of learning space developments

3. **Ensuring that all modules and courses meet and exceed the university's threshold standards for technology enhanced learning and:**

a. Support staff to move beyond threshold standards in the use of learning technologies with a focus on interaction and collaboration

b. Develop supporting guidance and resources to enable staff to enhance their practice via the innovative use of learning technologies.

4. **Supporting staff and students in the acquisition and updating of their digital capabilities, skills and knowledge in support of learning**

5. **Evaluating and adopting innovative technologies that support good learning and promote learner engagement by identifying and evaluating learning technologies that promote interaction and collaboration.**

6. **Developing new flexible and inclusive modes of delivery and examining how they might replace or enhance provision on campus through:**

a. Evaluating new and existing practice of learning at a distance (including MOOC pilots, collaborative provision and placement support) to identify practice that can enhance provision on and off campus

b. Extending flexible learning pilots informed by evaluation

c. Develop o flexible modes of delivery

d. Developing new flexible and inclusive modes of delivery (on and off campus) supported by the development of a flexible learning framework to ensure a strategic approach.

7. **Implementing technologies and support as required by Assessment Journey Programme to support online submission, feedback and marking.**

8. **Identifying and implementing (where appropriate) learner analytic tools to analyse data held across our systems to support the development of our courses and student learning**

9. **Working in partnership with key stakeholders across the university to ensure that appropriate and up-to-date learning technologies to meet the needs of the University are in place.**

Key Performance Indicators

To achieve our overall University targets for NSS student satisfaction ratings for Overall satisfaction, Teaching on my course, Academic Support, Assessment and feedback, Personal Development

To meet our University and Access Agreement targets for recruitment, retention and non-continuation rates (Young FT Degree and Mature FT Degree) and attainment (Good Honours)

Achieve a sector position in the upper quartile of full-time undergraduate students attaining full-time graduate employment, based on data provided for the Destination of Leavers in Higher Education by 2017/18.

Outcomes from module and course evaluation, Student Barometer, Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research Experience Surveys indicate high levels of student satisfaction with the quality of teaching and learning

To achieve overall University targets for professional recognition and to increase the numbers of Senior and Principle Fellows to 200 and 20 respectively by 2016/17.

All teaching staff are engaged in scholarship, practice-led or pedagogic research and engage with peer review of teaching.

All teaching staff maintain and evidence their standing as professional teachers in higher education and their status as fellows of the HEA through engagement with CPD

University has an enhanced external reputation within the UK sector as indicated by involvement in high profile external projects, an increase in National Teaching Fellowships, and high profile activities and events.

Outcomes of the external review of our programmes highlight the quality of teaching and student outcomes.

Reward and recognition of teaching and learning:

- Career paths that reward and recognise the quality of teaching are established
- Staff are routinely appointed to the professoriate on the basis of the quality of their teaching
- Continued success of the Inspirational Teaching Awards