

LEARNING TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY.

MAXIMISING ACHIEVEMENT: THE TRANSFORMATION OF LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Introduction and Context – the Greenwich Experience

Higher education is undergoing a period of rapid and significant change. The University of Greenwich therefore needs a robust Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy that can operate successfully in this climate. This Strategy is underpinned by principles that, while respecting the past history of the institution, set the future direction of travel: an education that provides our graduates with the qualities required to succeed in competitive global environments.

Our Strategy focuses on making a positive difference to our students, our staff and our communities. The emphasis on good teaching has always been at the heart of the University of Greenwich. Students come to us from many different countries and diverse backgrounds and expect a high quality, exciting student experience in stimulating and supportive networked environments that will equip them for lifelong learning, employment or further study.

We aim to provide our students with a supportive learning experience that is characterised by developing strong relationships from the very first point of contact to when they graduate and become part of our alumni. The Strategy sets out five objectives, each with a set of goals, to transform the curriculum and its delivery, and provide a dynamic learning environment in which students can achieve their full potential and gain graduate employment or progress into further study.

External measures of student satisfaction in the UK show that the University of Greenwich offers a highly valued learning experience - ranked highly in London and the South East for teaching excellence. We are thus well placed to implement this ambitious Strategy and to maximise the success of all our students. To this end by 2017 we aim to increase the number of students graduating with good honours degrees (greater than 65% for undergraduates), to improve retention rates (93%) and to develop our curriculum to enhance employment outcomes (employment and further study to be above the sector median). We aspire to be in the top 50 universities in the National Student Survey by 2017. We also aim to continue to increase our entry tariff points to bachelor degrees, while sustaining a commitment to widening access to all those UK and international students who can benefit from a University of Greenwich higher education, irrespective of their social, cultural and economic backgrounds.

The Greenwich Graduate Initiative, introduced in 2010, articulates the attributes and behaviours we expect our graduates to develop whilst they are studying at the University. It comprises three main elements: *Scholarship and Autonomy*, *Creativity and Enterprise*, and *Cross-Cultural and International Awareness*, and these inform curriculum development, programme review and delivery, and employment outcome opportunities.

The University of Greenwich is committed to:

Developing graduates who:

- Have an informed understanding of their discipline or professional practice, and the ability to question its principles, practices and boundaries
- Think independently, analytically and creatively, and engage imaginatively with new areas of investigation
- Appreciate disciplines and forms of professional practice beyond their own, and draw connections between them
- Are intellectually curious, responsive to challenges and demonstrate initiative and resilience

Giving our graduates the confidence to:

- Recognise and create opportunities, and respond effectively to unfamiliar or unprecedented situations or problems
- Generate new ideas and develop creative solutions or syntheses
- Communicate clearly and effectively, in a range of forms, taking account of different audiences
- Make use of familiar and emerging information and communication technologies
- Seize and shape the opportunities open to them on leaving the university

Producing graduates who:

- Engage effectively in groups whose members are from diverse backgrounds
- Appreciate the importance of behaving sustainably
- Move fluently between different cultural, social and political contexts
- Value the ability to communicate in more than one language.

In delivering this commitment, the Strategy's goals outlined here rely upon a framework that supports the development of professionalism of all staff who teach or support student learning. The University actively promotes internal and external schemes that recognise excellence in teaching practice. The Teaching Fellow Network comprises Teaching Fellows who have been recognised within the institution for excellent teaching as well as four staff awarded National Teaching Fellowship by the Higher Education Academy (HEA). HEA accredited professional development and recognition is an important element of this Strategy and we aim to have 75% of academic staff with a recognised teaching qualification within five years. In the last five years the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education providing HEA Fellowship has been awarded to over 100 members of staff, and is a requirement for new academic staff. The HEA accredited GOLD (Greenwich Opportunities in Learning and Development) framework recognises professionalism in teaching, learning and assessment and provides additional opportunities that link formal and informal learning. All postgraduate research students who engage in any form of teaching activity undertake professional development through a programme that leads to Associate Fellowship of the HEA.

This Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy is closely aligned to the *University of Greenwich Strategic Plan 2012-2017 – Making Greenwich Great*. The Strategy provides a framework and direction to Faculties, Schools and disciplines in delivering the best learning experience for all Greenwich students enrolled on taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The Pro Vice-Chancellors for the Faculties, together with their senior management teams will be accountable for the implementation of the Strategy within their Faculties, and will ensure that action plans are developed and implemented in their constituent disciplines in association with Offices. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development) will monitor this process and report achievement of outcomes.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

To achieve our key strategic aim of raising student achievement, we have five interlinking objectives, each with a set of goals: *cultivating relationships; the transformation and enrichment of curricula; the transformation of programme delivery; the transformation of learning environments; and succeeding after university*. In its drive to achieve an excellent higher education experience, the Strategy promotes the development of a variety of approaches to learning, teaching and assessment that combines personal interaction with the effective use of appropriate and emerging learning technologies. It aims to enhance all stages of the student life cycle as students transition into, through and out of university, and into their future careers or further study.

1 Cultivating relationships

1.1 To promote awareness of the University of Greenwich

- 1.1.1. To establish close ties with schools and colleges and to engage in the development of the University Technical Colleges in Greenwich and Kent

- 1.1.2. To encourage links with the local business community and graduate employers
- 1.1.3. To build effective partnerships and relationships with relevant external stakeholders such as government agencies, national organisations, professional bodies

1.2 To become a university of choice for local, national and international applicants.

- 1.2.1 To maintain our commitment to widening access to students who can benefit from higher education, irrespective of their social, cultural and economic background
- 1.2.2 To provide relevant and dynamic programmes that meet the needs of a diverse student community.

1.3 To nurture a culture of belonging within the academic and social community.

- 1.3.1 To develop and evaluate activities aimed at nurturing a culture of belonging via pre-entry and transition activities, mentoring and peer mentoring, personal tutoring, and group and collaborative learning for all programmes of study
- 1.3.2 To identify and promote the use of technologies that enhance learning, support practice and application, develop networks, and encourage dialogue between students and staff
- 1.3.3 To encourage students to engage with the local community via volunteering, acting as student ambassadors and undertaking internships and work placements

2 Transformation and enrichment of curricula

2.1 To offer programmes that provide stimulating and intellectually challenging opportunities to develop the graduate attributes expected by employers.

- 2.1.1 To engage students in developing their skills, knowledge and attributes, to succeed and realise their full potential and to succeed in the workplace
- 2.1.2 To support approaches that make learning more effective through active inquiry
- 2.1.3 To ensure that learning and teaching are research-informed

- 2.1.4 To build upon a well articulated developmental approach that supports programmes through review and approval, including enhancing the processes by which the university engages with student and employer feedback and the ways this feeds into learning design
- 2.1.5 To design programmes that support flexible and accelerated study, where appropriate.
- 2.1.6 To ensure all programmes conform to the academic standards of the University of Greenwich and external bodies, such as the Quality Assurance Agency and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)
- 2.1.7 To implement fully the Greenwich Graduate initiative
- 2.1.8 To embed specific activities into programmes aimed at building confidence and understanding self in preparation for the world of work

2.2 To develop and implement approaches to feedback and assessment that maximise learning and student outcomes.

- 2.2.1 To ensure that the balance between formative and summative assessments, and the type of assessment set, is best suited to enable active learning to take place
- 2.2.2 To ensure that assessment complies with the principles of fairness and transparency
- 2.2.3 To develop approaches to feedback that impact positively upon learning and deliver improvements to student outcomes

3 Transformation of programme delivery

3.1 To support diverse and flexible approaches to learning

- 3.1.1 To provide all students with an effective experience that enhances learning in flexible or face-to-face modes
- 3.1.2 To improve digital literacy in staff and students by providing professional development opportunities for all to become familiar and comfortable with the use of technologies to enhance learning

- 3.1.3 To establish a pedagogic and media service to support the design and delivery of e-learning

3.2 To ensure that staff who teach and support learning are appropriately prepared, supported and recognised

- 3.2.1 To continue to provide and promote professional development opportunities for staff at every stage of their career via the University's HEA accredited GOLD Framework and Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education
- 3.2.2 To establish a staff peer-observation scheme that seeks to share best practice and support staff development
- 3.2.3 To recognise and reward excellence in teaching, facilitating student learning and assessment via promotions criteria and reward schemes that recognise individual excellence and developing excellence in others
- 3.2.4 To develop a range of sabbatical opportunities to invigorate practice and import innovative teaching and learning opportunities

3.3 To place students at the heart of programme evaluation

- 3.3.1 To work in partnership with students and the Students Union to enhance design and delivery of the curriculum
- 3.3.2 To further develop student representation across all levels of the University to ensure the highest levels of participation in national and university surveys of the student experience (NSS, USS, PTES and the International Student Barometer Survey)
- 3.3.3 To enhance the University's practice in collecting and analysing student feedback on undergraduate and postgraduate courses via either mid-cycle or end-cycle evaluation

4 Transformation of learning environments

4.1 To enhance the productive working practices of staff and students by designing effective learning environments

- 4.1.1 To develop a rolling programme of refurbishing the physical environment that takes account of research on the impact of suitable space and space design on learning (formal and informal) and assessment
- 4.1.2 To provide a technical infrastructure that supports new and emerging learning, teaching and assessment technologies in every programme
- 4.1.3 To align capital investments (physical and ICT) with the needs of students and the learning, teaching and assessment design within the curriculum

4.2 To support flexible learning and teaching

- 4.2.1 To develop enhanced use of virtual learning environments and mobile technologies to promote flexible learning
- 4.2.2 To make effective use of ICT to encourage and improve communication and networking between students, staff and the community

5 Succeeding after university

5.1 To ensure the development of skills and attributes of all students

- 5.1.1 To encourage and support all students to undertake formal learning opportunities and extra-curricular activities to develop the Greenwich Graduate Attributes profile and enhance the attractiveness of Greenwich Graduates to employers
- 5.1.2 To increase internships, work placements, networking, work-shadowing and similar initiatives that enhance students' confidence and understanding of the world of graduate employment
- 5.1.3 To develop close relationships with University alumni to learn from their success and to enrich the experience of future generations of Greenwich Graduates
- 5.1.4 To encourage career planning and job-seeking to begin prior to graduation by providing guided access to commercial recruitment databases, mentoring and guidance on opportunities for further study beyond undergraduate or masters degree

Meeting our challenges

The purpose of this Strategy is to provide direction to disciplines and Faculties in devising innovative curricula and outstanding learning opportunities. Learning requires both a shared endeavour between staff and students, and the engagement of students in formal and informal learning situations to maximising retention and student success.

The success of this Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy relies upon nurturing a culture of belonging, aspiration and excellence within our academic and social community.

At the end of the five-year period of the Strategy we will meet our key performance indicators and experience a greater sense of partnership between staff and students across the University, and between the university and employers, and the local community.

Through its realisation we look forward to building upon, and celebrating the continued success of our students who will leave as highly employable and well rounded graduates.