

Southampton Solent University

Teaching and Learning Strategy

1. University Mission

The pursuit of inclusive and flexible forms of Higher Education that meet the needs of employers and prepare students to succeed in a fast-changing competitive world.

2. Teaching and Learning Strategy: Vision

This strategy builds upon the success of the Strategic Plan 2004-08 and its associated Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Development Strategy. The grant of taught-degree awarding powers and University status achieved major objectives of the plan and confirmed the high standards and quality of the educational provision. Graduate employment statistics above the sector benchmark have evidenced successful implementation of the Teaching and Learning objective to 'thoughtfully prepare students for the world of work'.

The new strategy is designed to steer the next stage of development by:

- systematically extending the accessibility and flexibility of the provision;
- increasing the range of learning opportunities available to students within and surrounding the curriculum;
- extending the range of staff expertise, experience and ability to innovate; and above all
- enhancing the employability of students and their capacity to succeed in a fast-changing world.

3. Aims

The aims of the Teaching and Learning Strategy are to:

- i Build and constantly renew a flexible learning experience that meets the diverse needs of students and their prospective employers;
- ii Creatively connect theory and practice, the experience of learning and learning from experience, so that students, staff, employers and partners are actively engaged in the education process;
- iii Steer and shape continual improvement and innovation in teaching, learning and assessment, incorporating the best of the new and sustaining the rigorous standards and quality demanded of higher education;

- iv Stimulate and support our staff continually to develop their expertise across the range of activities essential for delivering educational excellence and achieving the University's mission and vision.

4. Objectives

i To provide distinctive higher education

Programmes offered by the University will:

combine academic, theoretical and practical study;

foster critical, creative and personal skills for self-development and employability;

provide opportunities to apply higher knowledge and skills in 'real life' and 'real work' learning situations.

Learning opportunities provided will:

Foster higher skills and employability;

Be high-quality, varied, up-to-date and underpinned by the research and professional practice of staff;

stimulate initiative, independence and collaborative approaches to team-working and leadership;

include:

- working on 'live' briefs with clients, employers or community groups
- work placements and internships in industry, business, the community or within the University itself
- collaborative research and practice projects working with students from other disciplines, staff and external partners
- involvement in student and staff business and community enterprises
- volunteering
- career planning
- learning another language and learning abroad, through exchange arrangements with partner institutions in Europe and elsewhere;

be available to all - as part of the core curriculum; as credit-bearing options and as extra-curricula activities sponsored by the University as part of the wider Solent Life initiative;

be monitored and evaluated by students, staff and stakeholders, promoting continuous improvement and assuring quality.

The content and learning activities of the programmes will:

question real world issues and problems and how to solve them;

reflect the University's commitments to social justice and to investigating the global, local and personal implications of knowledge and change;

incorporate and reflect the latest scholarship within the disciplines and up-to-the-minute practice in industry, business and the professions;

use the latest technologies, facilities and good practice in ways that are geared to the needs of students and what they must achieve;

engage students actively in the learning process and stimulate enthusiasm for learning;

encourage and challenge students to explore the wider contexts of knowledge and of the applications of their learning.

Assessment will:

be consistently rigorous, fair, balanced, proportionate, relevant and developmental;

complement the learning activities and test attainment of the knowledge and skills these are designed to foster;

ensure the relevance and authenticity of assignments by imaginatively combining the best of current pedagogy with knowledge of changing practices and needs in industry and employment;

express its purposes, tasks and marking criteria clearly, so that results can be readily understood by students, employers and other stakeholders;

accurately measure attainment of knowledge and skills in a range of learning situations, including the workplace, the community, on the Internet, working alone or with others;

foster and test acquisition of subject knowledge and understanding, academic and research skills, practical, creative and professional skills, and transferable skills for personal development and employability;

enable students to gauge their progress and achievement and become self-critical and reflective individuals and team members;

secure and demonstrate the standards of student achievement and of the University's awards.

ii. To provide flexible and accessible ways of learning

The University's programmes will be delivered:

in the daytime, evenings and at weekends;

as full-time, part-time, flexible, short, intensive and accelerated courses, and as credit-bearing blocks of learning that can be studied separately and 'banked' towards an award;

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at the University itself and at partner FE institutions within the region;

through selected partnerships with HE institutions abroad;

in the workplace and the community through our partnerships with employers, organisations and agencies;

through effective use of fit-for-purpose learning spaces within the University and blended learning, combining Internet delivery with live contact with tutors and peers;

via a varied mix of learning activities and assessments, tailored to meet students' individual learning needs and to match their personal learning styles.

Students will be able to:

choose their programme of study from our extensive portfolio of courses;

negotiate a personal, bespoke programme that suits their diverse needs and circumstances;

receive credit for the learning and experience achieved in paid or voluntary work, as part of their programme of study or as an entry route into higher education;

gain higher qualifications, or extend their professional development;

benefit from the academic and professional expertise of University staff and of partner practitioners in industry, business, the public sector and the professions;

access learning resources, facilities and support when they need to, via our 24-hour learning network.

iii. To provide each student with the support to realise their personal potential

The University will offer:

expert advice and guidance on the content of its programmes and how they work, the types of delivery and assessment they use, what they can lead to in terms of qualifications and careers, and how to enter;

bursaries to assist eligible students to access higher education;

a well-organised and welcoming induction to higher education and to the different stages and techniques of learning as students progress through their programme;

personal and learning support through its Student Support Network of tutors, Student Support Officers and trained professionals, its Students 1st facilities and Library and Information Services, providing

- academic and personal guidance
- individual financial and housing advice

- careers information, career development planning, CV and application preparation and interview training
- help with study skills, English language and academic English
- IT skills development
- counselling
- disability support
- support for overseas students
- multi-faith chaplaincy
- training in information retrieval, information searching, research methodologies and practices;

constructive and focussed comments on all coursework assessments, evaluative summary feedback on examinations, and opportunities for formative assessment and feedback throughout programmes of study;

rich learning materials to support study on all units, available on- and off-campus through the MyCourse VLE;

student-to-student support through training and availability of mentors, peer-guides, student ambassadors, student representatives and through participation in interactive e-learning forums;

personal development opportunities for all students within the curriculum, through learning activities that foster independence, initiative, entrepreneurship, team-working and leadership skills and promote social justice and equality of opportunity;

opportunities to acquire and practice interpersonal skills through volunteering and mentoring activities, internships, creative and commercial projects, and involvement in Solent Life projects with staff, fellow students, employer and community partners;

access to a wide range of social, sports and cultural activities and societies;

employability skills development and career development for all students through work and volunteering placements, career planning and coaching units assessed for credit as part of the curriculum;

paid employment opportunities through the Jobshop scheme, enabling students to earn while they study;

contacts with graduate employers and access to a full range of employment vacancies, opportunities for further study and careers advice while studying with the University and for two years after graduation.

iv. To support our staff in delivering the educational experience set out in this Strategy

The University will invest time and resources in supporting staff to:

Extend their subject expertise by

- studying for postgraduate qualifications
- engaging in subject and discipline networks
- keeping up to date with knowledge and practice at the forefront of their discipline
- carrying out subject-based research and advanced professional practice
- publishing, presenting and otherwise disseminating the results of their research and advanced professional practice both within and outside the University
- feeding their subject expertise and advanced professional practice into the curriculum and the wider learning experience of students.

Enhance their teaching practice by

- studying for postgraduate teaching qualifications
- engaging with teaching and learning subject centres
- being active members and fellows of the Higher Education Academy
- keeping up to date with the best current practice in teaching and learning and with the scholarship of pedagogic practice
- carrying out pedagogic research and advanced scholarship
- publishing, presenting and otherwise disseminating the results of their pedagogic scholarship, research and advanced professional practice, within and outside the University
- using their pedagogic expertise, research and advanced professional practice to enhance their own teaching and assessment practice, the portfolio and curriculum and the learning experience of students
- reflecting on their own practice and that of their peers, seeking and responding to feedback from students and fellow professionals.

Update and refine their professional practice by

- undertaking professional qualifications
- engaging with their industry and employers
- being active in professional bodies and organisations
- undertaking periods of work within their industry or profession, through sabbatical arrangements, short placements or 'industry exchanges'
- undertaking consultancy, knowledge exchange or partnership project working with industry, employers and partner organisations
- feeding this experience back into the curriculum and student learning and extending industry and employment-based learning opportunities for students.

Increase their entrepreneurial skills by

- undertaking training in current business and commercial practices
- engaging with business networks and developmental agencies
- developing and exploiting business opportunities on behalf of the University
- undertaking periods of work with business, through sabbatical arrangements, short placements or 'business exchanges', consultancy, knowledge exchange or partnership working projects as enterprise activity
- feeding their entrepreneurial skills back into the curriculum and student learning and providing opportunities for students to take part in enterprise activities.

Increase their contribution to access, lifelong learning and community engagement by

- liaising with FE partners and schools to strengthen access and educational links
- working with partners to provide development opportunities for FE staff, employers, community groups, engaging them in jointly designing, delivering, assessing and evaluating the educational provision
- engaging with community groups, organisations and agencies
- putting their professional knowledge and skills and leadership abilities to use as volunteers within the community
- helping to develop others through working as educators with community organisations
- feeding this community-based advanced scholarship back into the University and student learning, enhancing links between the University and the community, access routes into the University, and opportunities for student volunteering and community working.

Expand their knowledge of good practice in higher education by

- acting as external examiners, assessors, accreditors and postgraduate research supervisors and examiners
- being members of internal and external validation and review panels
- liaising with the University's partner HEIs
- attending external workshops and events concerned with HE policy and practice (e.g. QAA forums, HEA, UVAC)
- carrying out research and consultancy on HE policy and practice
- feeding this knowledge and experience back into the University, to enhance its operation and the student experience.

5. Performance Indicators

In measuring the successful implementation of its Teaching and Learning Strategy, the University uses the following performance indicators:

Performance Indicator	Definition/measurement	Target	Source
Results of external assessments	Latest assessments by QA agencies	Satisfactory outcomes	ASQS
Student progression	Numbers projected to complete	Above benchmark	RIU
Student achievement	Degrees awarded by Faculty	Above benchmark	ASQS
Student satisfaction	National Student Survey results, by scale and overall satisfaction	Sustained improvement in NSS outcomes	RIU
Employability and student destinations	DLHE	Above benchmarks	RIU