

University of Bath Learning and Teaching Strategy 2009/10-2011/12

Strategic Vision

Informed by the student body, we will provide a distinctive international learning environment which recognises the prominence of our research, is intellectually challenging and is strongly applied focusing on the employability of our students.

Strategic Aims

- To promote critical intellectual enquiry and independent academically rigorous learning in a supportive educational environment.
- To sustain and advance the international recognition of the University for the quality of our teaching.
- To provide our students with direct experience of leading edge of research in their discipline or field and to develop their research and technical skills.
- To promote the application of knowledge and skills such that our students are capable of making significant contributions as employees and citizens.
- To give our students opportunities to learn through internships and placements in a wide variety of different settings in the UK and internationally.
- To promote flexible learning provision in order to respond to student diversity and, at postgraduate level, to the needs of practising professionals.
- To challenge and support our students in helping them achieve their full potential.
- To work with our students in building and developing our learning environment to make it as stimulating, relevant and satisfying as possible.
- To ensure that our graduates are capable of making useful contributions in a global intellectual and economic environment.
- To support and reward excellence in teaching in order to build the reputation of the University and its staff.
- To work with regional partners to offer vocational higher education.
- To develop a portfolio of continuing professional education supported by research to meet the needs of employers and individuals.

Operational Plan

The operational plan is in two parts. The first part specifies some indicators of performance that should be regularly scrutinised by the relevant University Committee, normally the Learning and Teaching Committee. The second part establishes a set of strategic objectives which should guide annual planning for the relevant professional support services and the academic departments.

University Council has established a set of Key Performance Indicators for Learning and Teaching:

- Average tariff scores of undergraduate entrants
- Continuation rates of undergraduate students
- National Student Survey

The Learning and Teaching Committee needs to have a more extensive list of indicators to monitor the performance of the plan:

Students

- National Student Survey, International Student Barometer, Bath Student Experience Survey.
- Undergraduate and postgraduate application and conversion rates.
- Student complaints and academic appeals.
- External prizes for students.
- Enrolments and Awards through the Bath Award Scheme.
- Numbers and proportions of students on placements.
- Student employability data.
- Number of scholarships offered to Bath students.

Staff

- Number of staff applying for University teaching awards.
- Number of Departments offering teaching awards.
- Number of staff achieving external recognition of teaching excellence e.g. Professional Body awards, national Teaching Fellowships, HEA Fellowships.
- Number of staff engaged with learning and teaching development events.
- Number of staff achieving promotion through the teaching route.

Organisation

- Quality and timeliness of Degree Scheme Reviews.
- Rate of major curriculum changes and developments.
- Number and quality of international partnerships.
- Extent of take up of English and Mathematics support.
- Student support statistics.
- Development and uptake of e-learning.

Strategic Objectives

Learning and Teaching Enhancement

- Promote a culture of enhancement of learning and teaching throughout the institution and its partner organizations.
- Bring the Quality Assurance and Learning and Teaching functions closer together including merging the Quality Assurance Committee with the Learning & Teaching Committee.
- Work with staff to improve and develop their teaching and assessment practices.
- Benchmark our Postgraduate Certificate in Academic and Professional Practice against provision in comparable institutions.

Curriculum Development

- Develop a scheme for regular review of the Bath curriculum portfolio, taking into account our reputation, learner profiles, student markets, employer needs and resource opportunities and restraints
- Ensure that we are offering an appropriate curriculum for all our students.
- Review the programme approval process to simplify it whilst retaining proper scrutiny.
- Encourage academic departments to make close links with the relevant HEA subject centres.
- Encourage flexible provision of modes of delivery wherever this is thought to be appropriate.

- Broaden our portfolio in particular in the area of professional doctorates, research degree provision and Continuing Professional Development.

E-Learning

- Support and maintain Moodle as the University's VLE and encourage its use by both staff and students including those based in partner organisations.
- Continue to develop a range of e-learning tools that meet both staff and student needs, building upon new technological and pedagogical opportunities.
- Develop appropriate and effective e-learning development and support programmes for staff and students.
- Seek innovative ways to use e-learning in the support of enhancement of assessment and feedback.

Learning Spaces

- Engage the academic community in a discussion on the future configuration of learning spaces (to include lecture spaces, classrooms and more informal and flexible spaces).
- Develop new learning spaces in dialogue with academic staff and students.
- Complete the current refurbishment programme of existing learning spaces.

Assessment

- Promote a greater variety of assessment modes, including *E-assessment*.
- Promote greater quality feedback to students through formative assessment and the introduction of broad range of feedback mechanisms.
- Examine the potential to provide feedback on examinations.
- Ensure the implementation of the New Framework for Assessment.

Placements/Internships/Work Based Learning

- Establish Bath as the premier University for placement provision in the UK.
- Establish Bath as a provider of niche, research led foundation degrees and honours' years.
- Raise the quality of placement organisation and review its location in the University structure.
- Reinforce the learning context of placement provision.
- Improve the quality of student re-engagement with the University following placements.

Internationalisation

- Promote suitable and sustainable partnership and exchange agreements with overseas universities for both staff and students.
- Seek to increase the proportion of overseas students in the University in selected areas.
- Improve the induction and support arrangements for overseas students, including English language provision.
- Continue to seek ways to promote cultural and educational interaction between students.

Academic Induction

- Place more emphasis on inducting students into our learning community by preparing students more effectively for the transition from their previous educational environment and by extending the induction period.

- Recognise that international students require particular support with academic and social integration.
- Introduce a new scheme for personal tutoring.
- Promote the use of a student buddy system throughout all departments.

Peer Learning

- Recognise the high quality of our students and capitalise on opportunities for peer learning.
- Encourage the development of communities of practice in discipline areas.
- Develop more schemes for peer mentoring.
- Provide more training and reward for peer mentoring.

Timetable

- Promote timetable reform to provide students with a better learning experience.
- Promote timetable reform to support the provision of high quality block mode CPD.

Student Information

- Improve the quality of information that we provide to our students.
- Investigate a variety of alternative channels of delivering this information.
- Recognise the primacy of the SSLC as a focus for discussion with students.
- Have a timetable for ensuring that every undergraduate and postgraduate Unit has its own up to date Web or Moodle page.

Student Support

- Develop the student support 'one stop shop' in 4West.
- Further align academic and pastoral support provided by the University and the Students' Union.
- Explore whether we can extend the success of our writing skills support to a wider student population.
- Ensure that our bursary provision is competitive and accessible.
- Attract more scholarship support for our students where this fits with strategic objectives.
- Seek ways of continuing the successful provision of mathematics and statistics skills support through the MASH Centre.

Student Recruitment and Admissions

- Take steps to ensure that recruitment effort and resources are targeted effectively by subject, level and mode of study.
- Work to improve conversion rates for all programmes but for PGT provision in particular.
- Review our recruitment and admissions organisation with a view to making it more effective and efficient.
- Develop clear responses to the reform of the 14-19 curriculum and communicate these to potential applicants.
- Come to a view on the desired balance between Foundation Degrees, undergraduate honours programmes, taught postgraduate and research postgraduate provision.
- Review low recruiting masters level provision.
- Encourage the development of professional doctorates as being particularly suited to the Bath model of education.

Widening Participation

- In partnership with *AimHigher*, continue to offer a wide range of activities through which the University can raise the aspirations of young learners in targeted regional communities.
- Work to ensure that young learners are fully aware of the diverse range of programmes on offer at Bath and in higher education more generally.
- Undertake research and development work aimed at better understanding the barriers to progression to Bath for those who currently apply but are either unsuccessful or choose not to join the University.
- Through the excellence Hub and other initiatives, make a particular contribution to raising the aspirations of and developing the academic skills of gifted and talented young people.
- Develop the personal and professional skills of Bath students through their involvement as trained and committed student ambassadors and mentors.
- Offer high quality opportunities for higher education in FE through partnership working.
- Deliver Summer Schools to support progression routes to vocational provision.
- Deliver the progressions routes articulated in the Progression Accords signed by the University as a member of the Western Vocational Lifelong Learning Network.
- Contribute to the portfolio of demand-led provision offered within the Higher Level Skills Pathfinder Project.

Staff Recognition and Reward

- Publicise the new probation and progression arrangements to underline the importance of teaching.
- Seek to have one person at Departmental level who has overall responsibility for teaching.
- Encourage the development of Departmental prizes/recognition for teaching.
- Encourage staff seeking external recognition of teaching excellence, for example through National Teaching Fellowship awards, HE Academy awards, professional body awards.

Student Learning Experience

- Work with the Students' Union to engage students as much as possible in all aspects of the life of the University.
- Explore further ways of developing the University as giving students an international experience, socially and culturally as well as intellectually.
- Successfully launch and grow the Bath Award to recognise formally the achievements of our students outside of the academic curriculum.
- Encourage the development of more engagement with the arts through the provision of improved support and facilities.
- Work with the Students' Union to provide more and better quality social and Student Union space.