Learning Strategy

2017-2021

Learning Strategy
2017 - 2021

Who we will be

In our community students matter and learning matters.

All University of Leicester students, wherever they are, wherever they come from and however they study, will enjoy the best education and experience imaginable. Everybody in our University contributes to our ethos of educational excellence, which is enriched by staff and student partnership, outstanding research and scholarship, innovation at all levels and an inclusive approach in everything we do.

Students graduating from our programmes will be resourceful, independent and resilient. Proud of their achievements they will maintain a lasting connection with us. As well as a continuing curiosity about themselves and others, they will have the qualities of integrity, openness of mind, cross-cultural understanding, breadth of perspective and concern for ethics that equip them for professional success and active, informed global citizenship now and into the future.

We will work to support and promote social justice by ensuring that we work with all those who have the potential to succeed in higher education.

Our commitments

Discovery, transition, progress and success are the defining hallmarks of education and the student experience at our University.

Discover: offering a vibrant, successful academic portfolio
1. We will develop a distinctively flexible, exciting curriculum, so that students have opportunities to balance disciplinary depth, interdisciplinary breadth and employability skills development when following our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.
2. Our curricula will expressly encompass the breadth of the students' learning experience and their backgrounds, addressing equality, diversity, internationalization and sustainability.

Discover: assuring and enhancing quality
1. A commitment to academic quality and standards and effective curriculum design is a crucial element of our creative and collaborative approach to improving teaching and learning.
2. We will support all staff in developing their teaching skills and ensure that our processes allow them to demonstrate, and be recognised and rewarded for, their roles in developing, delivering and enabling the best education we can imagine.
3. We will ensure that the student voice is clearly heard in the ongoing development and review of our curricula.

Transition: excellent induction and transition
1. We will support future students through an excellent programme of relationships with schools and colleges and an unyielding commitment to widening participation
2. Our pre-arrival, welcome, induction and approach to the first year of higher education will build engagement, a sense of enjoyment and belonging, and the capacity for success, independence and pride.
3. We recognise that there are both progressive and different transitions to, within and from higher education for different groups of students, and we will support all of them in moving successfully throughout all these stages.

Progress: transformative teaching and learning
1. Our curricula, teaching and assessment will be enjoyably challenging: the best education is demanding, transforming and enlivening, and it will focus on future employability and professional success.
2. Our education will be enriched by research and scholarship, both discipline-based and in pedagogy.
3. We will make sure that students can engage in and, where helpful, combine different forms of learning, by face-to-face contact, distance, blended, part-time, or work-based, all of which aim to be the best they can be.
4. Our programmes and modules will provide a variety of high-quality learning, assessment, feedback and self-evaluation opportunities; we will better prepare our students for the opportunities, behaviours and demands of the professional workplace by embedding employability modules in the curriculum.
5. We will ensure that every undergraduate student engages in a significant employability experience through the Leicester Award, Leicester Award Gold, and the transferable skills framework.

Success: a community defined by partnership

1. Our community will be defined by partnership between students and staff in all aspects of university life, which celebrates diversity, inclusivity and good citizenship.

2. Retention and success are our primary goals: we will create an environment in which students from all walks of life are supported to realise their potential.

3. Our communications with, and support for students will be engaging, informative and positive; they will generate an atmosphere of mutual respect and convey a sense of the obligations as well as entitlements that stem from membership of a larger educational community.

4. We will work in partnership with students and the Students' Union to foster their creative and constructive contributions and their sense of responsibility for their education, and to encourage them to take a lead in projects that will improve their learning and experience.

5. We will encourage our students to be independent, to learn skills for life and work, to value their education and to contribute as alumni to our ongoing work in education and scholarship.

6. We will imagine and advocate for a physical and virtual teaching and learning estate, resources and technologies that effectively support our ambitions.

Our priorities, 2017-2021

Discover: A vibrant, successful academic portfolio will be delivered by:
- Maintaining and developing our undergraduate and postgraduate taught offer to provide flexibility, agility and responsiveness to student need, changing markets and demand;
- Working more closely with employers, industry, students and alumni to embed employability and transferable skills in the curriculum;
- Embedding the work of the curriculum transformation programme to re-design our undergraduate programmes, and extending this work to postgraduate programmes;
- Embedding the themes of equality, diversity and sustainability in all our programmes;
- Exposing as many students as possible to a cross-cultural experience;
- Utilising the full-range of modes of delivery to optimise the learning experience of students wherever and however they study.

Discover: Assuring and enhancing quality will be delivered by:
- Focusing more explicitly on programme design and the student journey through the programme of study, aided by programme teams working together with educational designers, quality advisers, student success teams and marketing advisers from the early stages of each development project;
- Implementing revised policy, process, procedure and systems for the effective management of the curriculum;
- Creating and implementing a 'vision' for excellence in learning and teaching practice, including by :
  - identifying, recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching and student-centred practice, including ways of enabling staff to demonstrate excellence;
  - supporting each individual in enhancing the quality of their teaching, assessment, feedback, curriculum design and student support;
  - embedding a stronger academic career development path around teaching, student experience and student support, advice and guidance;
  - celebrating the value we place on teaching and learning through the "Education Excellence Awards".

Transition: Excellent induction and transition will be delivered by:
- Embedding a universal peer mentoring scheme for all new students;
- Embedding the 'Fabulous First Year' for undergraduate programmes and extending the concept to include incoming postgraduates and returning students;
- Engaging with students prior to their arrival at University, and providing targeted support packages, including extension of the OnTrack programme.

Progress: Transformative teaching and learning will be delivered by:
- Supporting and resourcing a culture of innovation and the sharing of ideas and approaches to enhancing the student learning experience, including a focus on developing the roles of teaching and learning leaders;
- Drawing on scholarship and pedagogical research to enhance our approach to programme delivery by establishing a pan-institution research network;
- Recognising the diversity of the student body and embedding inclusivity within our curricula;
- Building sustainability into the curricula and student experience;
- Embedding internationalization and cross-cultural experience into all our programmes;

- Re-implementing our Digital Learning Environment and the associated development of digital skills and capabilities in staff and students;
- Implementing a strategy and schedule for twenty-first century teaching and learning space;
- Embedding employability modules and transferable skills into the curriculum;
- Implementing an institution-wide policy, procedure and systems for module evaluation and student feedback to inform programme design;
- Implementing the assessment strategy across all programmes of study;
- Developing a more consistent approach to feedback to student provision across the University, including discipline level policy and practice.

Success: A student experience that engenders success will be delivered by:
- Articulating how we create and sustain a community based on partnership between students and staff, with a set of clear partnership initiatives.
- Evolving a stronger partnership with the Students' Union and student representatives, by developing and agreeing a shared strategy for student voice, including surveys and insight.
- Creating a stronger focus on retention and engagement and to identify and support for students at risk, including the role of the personal tutor.
- Providing a learning analytics capability to support programme design and aid student success.
- Building on our strengths and growing profile in employability and professional futures by engaging more directly with employers and expanding opportunities for students to engage in significant experience.

Our Measures of Success

Our success will be measurable through a range of qualitative and quantitative metrics. Progress against these will be reviewed annually. This strategy document represents a refresh of the 2016-20 Learning Strategy: items from that iteration of the Strategy that have been completed have been removed.

Project Outcomes:
- Successful implementation of curriculum transformation and academic year restructuring; *monitored by Registry, CACs and APC*
- Completion of the Student Journey Project including: re-implementation of SITS; full auto- scheduling of the timetable; integration of electronic grading in the VLE with SITS; *monitored by Registry and ITS reporting to ULT*
- Completion of the professional developmental project with Academic Directors to define their job descriptions and improve effectiveness; *monitored by SEEG*
- Developing the Education Excellence Programme and implementing its actions across all departments; *monitored by the EdEx Steering Group and APC*

Targets:
- Ongoing successful outcomes in Annual Provider Review; *monitored by APC and Council*
- Gold outcome in the Teaching Excellence Framework by 2021; *monitored by APC and ULT*
- Improvement in the national rankings based on the student experience to re-establish Leicester as a Top 20 University; *monitored by ULT*
- Retaining our ranking in the top 5 research-led HEIs for widening participation; *monitored by Admissions and Planning Offices*
- Progressive improvement in the National Student Survey (Target 90% satisfaction, currently 85%), Post-Graduate Taught Experience Survey and Post-Graduate Research Experience Survey; *monitored by CACs and APC*
- Improvement in the rankings for the DLHE survey and LEO rankings from 2018 (Target upper quartile of HEIs and exceeding benchmark,); *monitored by Career Development Service, report to APC*
- A progressive increase in the proportion of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification, including HEA Fellowships (Target 90%, currently 69%); *monitored by Planning Office, report to APC and ULT*
- An increase in student retention (from 91.6 to 94% - equivalent to Top 20 mainstream universities*); monitored by Planning Office, CACs and APC*
- Reduction of the BAME attainment gap (Target 0%, currently 6%); *monitored by Planning Office and APC*

Who we are

VITAL - living our values
Our values go to the heart of everything we do, from the largest research project through to day to day interactions with colleagues and students.

Our values are explained at length **within our strategic plan** and underpin our motto *Ut Vitam Habeant* - so that they may have life.

Valuing people
We respect, trust and appreciate our people. We recognise others' achievements and our own. We celebrate success. We help everyone to achieve their potential.

Innovators
We have the confidence to solve problems creatively. We are always striving to improve our service. We are resilient, proactive, clear communicators. We nurture a safe environment for innovation.

Together
We work better when we work together. We collaborate with other stakeholders to share knowledge and best practice. We draw on others' expertise and create networks to develop new ideas.

Accountable
We are responsible for our actions. We hold ourselves and others to account and admit our mistakes. We agree what is expected and deliver on our promises. We are responsive and able to demonstrate where we've made a difference.

Leaders
We are confident professionals; we value knowledge and expertise and know when to use them. As leaders, we demonstrate integrity, honesty and transparency. We use our judgement and work well with others across all departments.