



EDUCATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE STRATEGY 2024 - 2030





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INTRODUCTION

The new Education and Student Experience Strategy follows the publication of the University's Strategic Plan, which will run to 2030.

Our ambitious Strategy aligns with all five of the University's strategic priorities and will contribute to the successful delivery of those. However, there is closest alignment with the "students," "staff" and "engagement" priorities. There are also strong and intentional alignments with the enabling strategies (Finance, International and Global Engagement, Digital, People and Research and Innovation). The Strategy's objectives have been produced in consultation with staff, students and other key stakeholders, led by the Deputy Principal Student Experience and the Deputy Principal Education.

The context in which the strategy has been written and more importantly, will be implemented, is one of the most challenging for the UK higher education sector since the University was created, against a backdrop of many complex global and societal problems. Our students, as future global citizens, and potential leaders in their fields, will be tasked with finding innovative solutions to those problems, and to other challenges that do not yet exist, and will need the appropriate skills, and attributes to do so.

Currently, there is a need for us to improve our student outcomes and levels of satisfaction, for our students' benefit but also for our reputation and standing in the sector. However, we have many strengths on which to build and firm foundations in our learning, teaching and assessment. Our staff are incredibly talented and committed to supporting our students and each other; they provide high-quality learning and development opportunities that can be strengthened to achieve even better outcomes for students. The Education and Student Experience Strategy will play a key part in addressing areas for improvement.

As our student body becomes increasingly diverse with varying demands on their time and resources, we must ensure the right levels of flexibility and efficiency in our programmes to benefit students; this growing diversity has been considered in creating the Strategy.



VISION

Our vision is to provide education with a purpose. This purpose includes:

- Inspiring our students' intellectual curiosity, empowering them to succeed and make a difference in the world.
- Ensuring equality of experience for all our students, wherever and however they study with us.
- Providing opportunities for all our students to develop the skills and knowledge to be highly employable and ready to excel in their careers.
- Embracing the diversity of our student body in all our activities.
- Creating a learning environment and student experience that fosters social mobility, social capital, responsibility, and justice.
- Bringing our university's values of ambition, integrity, and respect to life for students.

EDUCATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE LINKS TO STIRLING'S OTHER ENABLING STRATEGIES

1. **Finance** (Growth in overall student numbers, increase retention)
2. **Research and Innovation** (Research informed curriculum design and teaching, teaching informed research)
3. **People** (Leadership development, clear roles and responsibilities, support for learning and teaching enhancement)
4. **Digital** (Contemporary, innovative pedagogies, developing staff and students' digital skills, excellent virtual learning environments and resources)
5. **Estates** (Excellent learning environment, shared spaces, facilities, and resources, optimizing our campus assets)
6. **Global Engagement** (Growth of TNE and international student numbers, internationalisation at home, creating global citizens)

Objective One

CREATE A REFRESHED PORTFOLIO FIT FOR THE FUTURE



Moving From

An overly complex UG portfolio with high flexibility and choice, attractive to students but which creates operational inefficiencies and challenges. A degree of choice permitted which is a factor in worsening student outcomes and levels of satisfaction. A PGT portfolio which has variable success in recruitment and student outcomes, but the potential to grow in some areas, including online. An approach to portfolio review and growth that is rooted in subject rather than being market focused; processes for programme approval have limited institutional oversight and consistency.

Moving To

A simpler and refreshed portfolio, with a greater curation of student choice, a more coherent learning experience, improved student outcomes and satisfaction and which is more efficient to deliver. Portfolio review with greater institutional oversight, more consistency and effective collaboration between stakeholders. A market-driven and demand led approach to developing new programmes/products. The process for developing new programmes uses curriculum and learning design effectively and improves our market-competitiveness. Employability and graduate outcomes are considered as a critical part of portfolio offer.

1a) Review all aspects of our current programme design, structures, and curricula.

We will achieve this by:

- Establishing the degree of flexibility in our programmes which will create the optimal conditions for students' success and increase operational efficiency.
- Reviewing combined honours courses and pathways.
- Evaluating how we designate (and use) modules (pre-requisites/compulsory/optional) to make up a programme.
- Establishing maximum and minimum student numbers on modules.
- Reducing module collections and the extent of choice/optionality available.
- Aligning this work with other key projects, such as timetabling and the implementation of the new student information system.
- Devising a common curriculum design framework which leads to simplification of existing programmes and supports new programmes to be responsive to market trends.
- Building on existing good practice to develop an inclusive, innovative, curriculum, consistently informed by contemporary research and employers' needs, which addresses urgent societal challenges and embeds the transferable skills and knowledge for students to be global citizens.
- Redesigning the structure of the academic year to make the most of our resources to support an excellent student experience.

1b) Review the oversight and management of our portfolio.

We will achieve this by:

- Developing effective institutional oversight of the effectiveness of our portfolio, for continuous enhancement and to inform future decisions about new programmes/opportunities for growth.
- Bringing together disparate activities where we consider various aspects of our portfolio, to share information and insights and plan effectively for the future.
- Streamlining our processes for consideration and approval of ideas for new products and income generation, with more effective collaboration between our academic and professional services teams.

Objective Two

ENHANCE STUDENT SUCCESS



Moving From

Partial understanding of what drives our students' engagement, attendance and outcomes, a student record system which does not enable staff or students to easily understand their progress; below-benchmark/sector degree outcomes, decreasing retention and graduate outcomes. Good availability of student attainment data, but with limited/under-used reporting capability, and low attention paid to issues such as attainment/awarding gaps between different groups. Students learn varied skills, but do not recognise their transferable nature. Despite many initiatives to improve employability, we are not reaching all students.

Moving To

Clearly defined touchpoints and expectations to assist students to successfully navigate their academic journey. A more comprehensive understanding of students' engagement which informs actions/interventions, a fully integrated student information system that gives visibility of progress/risk and empowers students to have agency in their own development. Data reporting cycle established as BAU, which informs actions with positive impact. All students access support and develop the confidence, ambition, and skills to have agency for their own success and to thrive in a rapidly changing world; they understand and can articulate the skills they have learned in different contexts. Amongst the highest in the sector for all outcomes measures, for all student groups.

We will achieve this by:

- Developing our existing work on monitoring academic attendance to improve student engagement.
- Being clear with students in our expectations about their engagement (as well as attendance) and explaining why it is so important to student success.
- Delivering a sector-leading transition and induction programme that will quickly allow new students to feel part of our community.
- Prioritising student well-being by promoting participation in a wide range of co-curricular activities.
- Implementing a new student information system which will allow us to track students' progress more effectively.
- Embedding current plans to improve our approach to Personal Tutoring.
- Re-instanting progression boards to support better transitions between levels of study.
- Recognising that we have many strengths in our teaching and support, we will use the review of portfolio and curricula (Objective 1) to consider the nature of learning, teaching, and assessment as drivers to improve student success.
- Streamlining our approaches to annual monitoring at programme level to make them more data focused and action oriented; utilising key student attainment data sets more effectively to inform actions and continuous improvement.
- Devising a skills taxonomy, alongside revising our Graduate Attributes which will be embedded in our curriculum considering the breadth of skills our students will develop during study, part-time work, and work-based learning.
- Rethinking how we present and communicate advice and support for employment, skills development, entrepreneurship, and further study, evidencing accessibility and relevance to all students.
- Increasing opportunities for students to benefit from work-based and work-informed learning.
- Enabling all undergraduate students to benefit from global engagement opportunities, delivered through physical or virtual mobility, field visits or collaborative global classrooms.

Objective Three

PRIORITISE UP-SKILLING AND DEVELOPMENT OF ALL STUDENT-FACING STAFF



Moving From

Inconsistent approaches to identifying development of the capabilities our staff need to meet the academic requirements of our diverse student body. Some alignment between improving student satisfaction and outcomes and academic staff development. A range of ways to recognise and reward staff excellence at different levels in teaching, learning and student support. A lack of clarity for some roles and responsibilities.

Moving To

An ecosystem where the expertise, knowledge, personal and professional contributions of our staff (to student success) are recognised, supported and celebrated, and which will enable the activities outlined in the other Objectives. Clearer communication and understanding of roles and responsibilities.

We will achieve this by:

- Defining what we mean by “excellence” in teaching and support contexts, taking account of the needs of our diverse student body and communicating the kind of learning experience our students can expect, within their subject discipline (and why).
- Supporting the increase of scholarly activity (and its visibility) related to learning and teaching.
- Setting annual targets for Advance HE Fellowship at different stages and for National Teaching Fellows to show the high value we place upon individuals’ effective pedagogic practice and support for students.
- Building on existing approaches to recognising staff for their outstanding support for students.
- Offering systematic development and ongoing upskilling for all our academic and student support services staff.
- Defining the purpose of different roles/posts more clearly, linked to strategic priorities.
- Establishing a Digital Competency Framework, enabling staff to develop confidence and capabilities to enrich students’ learning.

STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR STUDENTS



Moving From

Unwieldy student rep system, adding layers to information gathering with low impact. Variable approaches to gaining and addressing student feedback. Partial co-creation and collaboration between staff and students for example, on curriculum design and approaches to learning and teaching.

Moving To

Strong partnership with students and the Students' Union to deliver shared ambitions. An engaged and responsive student body who have agency and multiple opportunities to influence and inform curriculum development and how their experiences can be improved. A connected student and staff community with a clear identity, pride and sense of belonging for all students, in which co-creation and co-development are encouraged and supported.

We will achieve this by:

- Providing multiple opportunities for students to be involved in shaping the quality of learning and make a positive impact on their own and others' experience. (including implementing the objectives of our Education and Student Experience Strategy).
- Reforming our student representative system, evidencing that diverse students' voices are heard and valued.
- Reviewing current approaches to responding to students' feedback and taking a collaborative approach to responding to students' feedback, working with the Students Union, staff and students.
- Introducing different ways of recognising students who demonstrate exceptional achievements and make a positive difference to our communities.



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