

Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy 2014-2022



**Harper Adams
University**

MARCH 2015

Introduction

The Harper Adams Learning, Teaching and Student Experience strategy provides a reference point for the development of all activities that enable and support the student experience.

The strategy has been developed to ensure that teaching and learning at the university can continue to thrive within the context of a rapidly changing environment. At the same time, the strategy is rooted in the traditional values that underpin Harper Adams University (including employability, sustainability, and application of knowledge) and it is aligned with the university's mission "*Higher education and research for the delivery of a sustainable food chain and rural economy*".

The strategy has been formed with input from staff and students at the university, as well as through an on-going evaluation of the external environment and sector trends. Themes reflected within this strategy emerged through engagement with the Student Academic Group, The University Community Charter review groups (staff and student representation), the Students' Union, Course Committees, the Assessment and Feedback Task Group, the Learning Innovations Group, the International Working Group and Learning & Teaching Forum attendees. Additionally two staff consultation meetings were held where 25 staff considered ideas for the revised strategy.

The presentation of this strategy

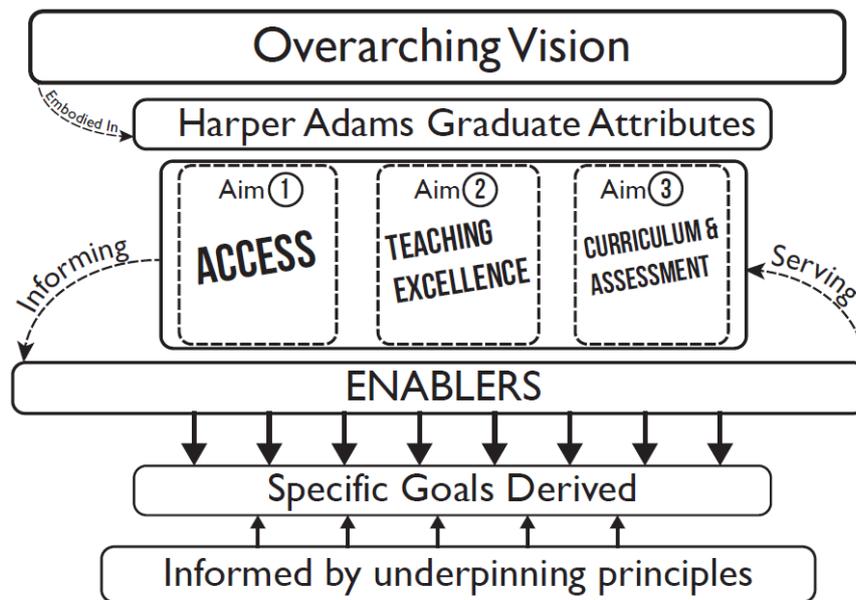
The Learning Teaching and Student Experience Strategy begins with a simple statement of vision for teaching and learning at Harper Adams University. The attributes that the university seeks to build in its students provided a further associated reference point to illustrate how this vision manifests in the student body. The student attributes provide an explicit link point between the curriculum reviews and the strategy; the graduate attributes will be subsumed within the generic level award outcomes.

Three strategic aims are presented and these are in turn underpinned by more detailed objectives. A fourth 'enabling' aim seeks to develop the processes and infrastructure, which facilitate all other activity.

A set of underpinning principles are stated to further guide the specific types of activities that are chosen by individuals, units or departments to enact the strategy.

The component parts of the strategy are shown diagrammatically below.

Finally some performance indicators are identified for each of the aims so that progress can be monitored.



Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy 2014-2022



A word cloud of student attributes. The words are arranged in a roughly triangular shape, pointing downwards. The colors used are pink, teal, yellow, and grey. The words are: Confident (pink), Inquisitive (teal), Team Players (grey), Problem Solvers (teal), Enterprising (teal), Effective Communicators (teal), Digitally Literate (pink), Practical Lifelong Learners (grey), Organised (pink), Globally And Ethically Aware (yellow), Motivated (pink), Knowledgeable (teal), Autonomous Determined (grey).

Confident
Inquisitive
Team Players Problem Solvers Enterprising
Effective Communicators
Digitally Literate Practical Lifelong Learners
Organised Globally And Ethically Aware
Motivated Knowledgeable
Autonomous Determined

Vision: Empowering learners to build successful and fulfilling professional careers.

Harper Adams Graduate Attributes:

The strategy is designed to develop students who are:

- Knowledgeable
- Problem solvers
- Digitally literate
- Enterprising
- Team players
- Effective communicators
- Autonomous
- Practical
- Determined
- Motivated
- Inquisitive
- Organised
- Pursuing sustainable practices
- Globally and ethically aware
- Lifelong learners

Key enablers:

- Partnership
- Innovation
- Information
- Built-environment
- Quality enhancement structures
- Disciplinary and pedagogic research
- Technology
- Employer networks
- Professional development

Underpinning principles:

- Learning and teaching will have high professional relevance
- Learning will be accessible to students from diverse backgrounds
- Learning opportunities will be fair and equitable
- Learning and teaching will advocate environmental sustainability and ethical approaches
- Learning and teaching will promote both global and local perspectives
- Students and teachers will share responsibility for success
- Opportunities to utilise appropriate technologies to enhance learning will be sought
- Learning and teaching will be informed by research and by engagement with employers
- The learning, teaching and wider student experience will be economically sustainable

Strategic aims:

1. Learning at Harper Adams will be fully accessible to a geographically and socially diverse student population.
2. Teaching excellence will be pursued to ensure that learners can fulfil their potential within the context of their studies and in future professional life; teaching will ensure that rural, land-based and agri-food sectors are well-served.
3. Curriculum, assessment, feedback and resources will engage, challenge motivate, reward and develop learners through means which are fair, accessible, relevant and economically sustainable.

Enabling aim:

4. Learning and teaching excellence will be supported by: robust quality management systems; staff development, research and scholarly activity; shared responsibility for success; and appropriate physical and digital infrastructures.

1. Learning at Harper Adams will be fully accessible to a geographically and socially diverse student population.

Enabling objectives:

- ✓ A broad offering of learning opportunities will be provided to serve the needs of the professionals in the rural economy at all stages of their career.
- ✓ Provision of guidance on teaching, assessment and reasonable adjustments, which will be kept under review to reflect growing evidence in this area.
- ✓ Support and guidance will be available for students who are under-represented in higher education or who are disadvantaged through their social or geographical background or personal circumstances.
- ✓ The curriculum, assessment journey and wider student experience will give students with disabilities a fair opportunity to succeed.
- ✓ Participation in learning from both urban and rural constituencies will be encouraged and supported.
- ✓ Appropriate counselling and information will inform student support requirements.
- ✓ Information shall be made available to students to enable them to plan their studies and make decisions about their learning.
- ✓ The campus will be further developed to provide a welcoming experience for students from all backgrounds.
- ✓ Student transitions in to higher education and in relation to placement will be facilitated by a supportive and inclusive approach.
- ✓ International students will be well supported in their wider student experience and in their academic studies.
- ✓ Flexible study modes will support the development of provision for industry professionals.
- ✓ The use of technology will actively support fair access to learning materials and experiences, so that students can make the most of learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom.

2. Teaching excellence will be pursued to ensure that learners can fulfil their potential within the context of their studies and in future professional life; teaching will ensure that rural, land-based and agri-food sectors are well-served.

Enabling objectives:

- ✓ Learning will be encouraged through varied and engaging programmes of study, which include work placements and work relevant content and activities.
- ✓ A wider programme of extra-curricular activities provided by the university and also where appropriate by the Students' Union, shall encourage employability skills.
- ✓ Professional recognition shall continue to be embedded into provision.
- ✓ Personal development will foster positive professional behaviours and effective study routines.
- ✓ Teaching in all curriculum areas will be informed by applied research and innovations in industry.
- ✓ Learning innovation will be championed within all programme areas to ensure that provision is both accessible and engaging.
- ✓ In-class and supplementary resources will be provided, through the virtual learning environment, to support learning in-line with the requirements of institutional benchmarks.
- ✓ Sustainable practices will be advocated within specific discipline contexts through the curriculum and also through extracurricular activities or events which seek to foster a sense of collective responsibility for bringing about a sustainable future.
- ✓ Placement and work based learning experiences will support students to develop the full range of graduate attributes.
- ✓ The campus environment will be utilised to ensure the development of applied skills.
- ✓ Student and stakeholder feedback about the quality of provision will inform continued enhancement activities.

3. Curriculum, assessment, feedback and resources, will engage, challenge motivate, reward and develop learners through means that are fair, accessible, relevant and economically sustainable.

Enabling objectives:

- ✓ Curriculum should be designed with meaningful input from students, staff, employers and professional bodies.
- ✓ Curriculum and assessment will be designed in such a way that they are accessible by learners from a range of different backgrounds, including, though not limited to, students with vocational qualifications, international students and students with specific disabilities.
- ✓ Curriculum and assessment shall be designed to develop independent learners with a lifelong learning ethos, and to cultivate the Harper Adams Graduate Attributes.
- ✓ Curriculum, assessment and resources should promote appropriate digital literacy in students.
- ✓ Curriculum should be designed to ensure that high quality formal and informal feedback is available to facilitate further learning and that students have an opportunity to act upon that feedback.
- ✓ Assessment shall be designed fairly, as to enable students from different backgrounds to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- ✓ Assessment loading should be balanced, manageable and economically sustainable.
- ✓ Wherever it is appropriate to do so, feedback should be delivered through electronic means, so to enhance legibility and accessibility, and wherever it is feasible to do so, students should submit only digital copies of assignments.
- ✓ Students should be supported to develop skills in using feedback to bring about their own development.
- ✓ Curriculum, assessment and feedback should be the focus of innovation and scholarly activity with the aim of continued enhancement.
- ✓ Teaching resources should be professionally presented, current and engaging.
- ✓ Decisions about assessment design and curriculum should be made with consideration of the economic and environmental sustainability.

4. Learning and teaching excellence will be supported by: robust quality management systems; staff development, research and scholarly activity; shared responsibility for success; and appropriate physical and digital infrastructures.

Enabling objectives:

- ✓ Staff involved in teaching will be supported and encouraged to develop their pedagogic practice through a range of different opportunities.
- ✓ Continued engagement between staff and industry will underpin the currency of the curriculum.
- ✓ All staff involved in teaching will participate in the university's peer observation scheme to inform continuous development.
- ✓ Staff are encouraged to actively participate in discipline specific communities of practice and the wider pedagogic community, to inform and develop practice.
- ✓ All staff who support learning are supported to work towards recognition in the UK Professional Standards Framework and to ensure good standing is maintained.
- ✓ Researchers will be provided the opportunity to develop knowledge of teaching and learning, alongside opportunities to develop applied skills in this area.
- ✓ Quality management approaches will support a culture of continuous enhancement.
- ✓ A flexible and robust quality infrastructure will ensure that new and evolving provision can meet the requirements of employers and the wider sector in a timely fashion, while still meeting standards concomitant with higher education.
- ✓ Technologies employed within the university should be appropriate to the needs of students and staff, and should be economically sustainable.
- ✓ Timetabling will, in so far as possible, be undertaken to ensure the physical requirements of classes are met.
- ✓ The development of new learning spaces will be undertaken with consideration of the needs of both students and teachers.
- ✓ The physical development of the campus will meet the evolving needs of students, and will reflect pedagogic and technological advances while continuing to provide learning spaces for learning that align with industry needs.
- ✓ Information and data to support the management of student transitions and decisions in teaching will be made available.
- ✓ Strong partnerships with students will be developed to inform enhancement of all aspects of the student experience.

Activity Monitoring

Each year, in September, academic departments, academic services and other support units will be asked to detail their contributions towards fulfilling the aims of the strategy for the past year and to identify how they will uphold the strategy in the forthcoming year. This information will be collated and shared with the Academic Board at its first meeting of the academic year. Thereafter it will be published on the portal with 'headline' points shared more widely. For ease of collation an electronic form on the Portal will allow colleagues to send their updates.

Each aim and associated objective will be presented to Academic Board with a range of activities from different departments to illustrate how the strategy is being enacted. This is very similar to how previous activities were shared.

Each year the strategy will be updated with an appendix entitled 'how are we doing?' to ensure transparency, particularly for students.

Performance monitoring

The Educational Development & Quality Enhancement Unit will collate data to enable progress to be monitored. A selection of performance indicators (PI) will help monitor the extent to which the university is achieving the aims and objectives articulated within this strategy. Again these will be reported to Academic Board's first meeting of the year (early typically November).

PI's are listed below. All data is already collected through internal monitoring processes and surveys. There is no extra burden on staff which is created by this data set.

Aim 1:

- Number of part time learners undertaking accredited provision.
- Number of new students from urban areas, non –agricultural backgrounds, entrants with vocational or academic qualifications, from backgrounds of disadvantage (disability; low participation neighbourhood; socio-economic classification IV-VII) or mature on entry.
- Number of students benefitting from Development Trust Awards.
- Student retention rates during year one including for the whole student population, and compared with distinct groups, such as students with vocational entry qualifications, those with disabilities, from low participation neighbourhoods, from socio-economic groups IV-VII and who are mature on entry.
- Award achievement levels for the graduating cohort and compared with distinct sub-groups

Aim 2:

- Student satisfaction with overall course quality.
- Number of programmes that have professional recognition.
- Number of programmes that have professional skills qualifications embedded within them.
- Number of modules receiving feedback of 4 or above (based on annual course monitoring).
- Number of modules that meet the university benchmark for online presence presented by department.
- Graduate employment levels, including in professional and managerial roles, by personal characteristics.

Aim 3:

- Student satisfaction with assessment loading.
- Student satisfaction with feedback as determined by the NSS survey.

- Feedback delivered within the stated time frame.
- Feedback delivered electronically.

Aim 4:

- Numbers of staff attending at least two Learning and Teaching Forum events or equivalent external events.
- Number of staff achieving UK Professional Standards Framework. Descriptor 1 (Associate Fellowship), 2 (Fellowship) and Descriptor 3 (Senior Fellowship).
- Student satisfaction with the use of technology within their programme.
- Student satisfaction with library resources.