



Higher Education Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Scholarship Strategy

April 2015

Version 4

1 Introduction

This Higher Education Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Scholarship strategy sets out the key objectives for increasing and sustaining excellence in teaching, learning, assessment and scholarly activity within and across Solihull College's HE curriculum offer.

It outlines the college's commitment to promoting and sustaining the high standards which have consistently delivered the best possible learning opportunities for its students, summarises the processes used by the college to assure itself and the wider academic, industrial, professional, and general public of the quality of the learning and teaching provided across both campuses, and describes the expectations for academic staff with regards to their scholarship-informed curriculum delivery.

It is one of a number of related, and inter-dependent subsidiary strategies which enable the college to meet its overall strategic goals, which are that by 2016 we will have:

- All students enjoying their learning, being ambitious and having very high standards of academic and personal achievement enabling them to progress to employment, further study and enterprise.
- Excellent leadership and management that will ensure the highest possible standards of teaching, training, learning, assessment and support.
- Innovative and responsive programmes that meet the needs of employers and students, respond to the demands of the economy and continuously explore new market opportunities.
- Effective strategies to shape plans with partners that respond to local economic growth opportunities and social priorities.
- Resources and inclusive learning environments that are of a consistently high quality, support the College's evolution, promote sustainability and inspire learning.
- Outstanding management processes that maintain financial stability and continuously improve the efficient use of resources.

2 Development of the Strategy

The contents and focus of this strategy document has been informed by a formal three-stage-process of consultation so as to ensure that all stakeholders in the college's Higher Education curriculum offer have an integral role in its ownership, and that of the college's strategic directions.

Student Engagement

Students representing many Higher Education programmes, both those registered at the college and from partner Universities were asked specifically what constitutes good quality teaching and learning with a view to informing the document's content and primary framework prior.

Internal Stakeholder Consultation

The initial draft strategy was written using the student input as a base, and then considered by the HE course teams, resource allocation departments, student representatives and the Higher Education Forum, and then revised in response to the comments and feedback received.

External Stakeholder Consultation

After internal agreement, the strategy was considered by a range of external stakeholders such as employers, academics from partner institutions, external examiners and an external consultant who revised the documentation in response to the comments and feedback received.

This final version was approved by all stakeholder groups prior to adoption, and is annually monitored and reviewed by the Higher Education Strategy Group.

3 Principles of Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Scholarship

Excellence in teaching and learning is central to both the college's vision "... to be the organisation of choice for learning for young people, adults and employers through their recognition of our excellent and distinctive experiences in vocational education and training" and its mission statement to "...make significant contributions to the local and regional economies and beyond, by providing high quality vocational education and training for individuals, employers and the wider community."

In order to ensure that all of our HE provision will adhere to these principles, the college is committed to following six strategic objectives across our HE curriculum offer.

We will:

1. Recognise, value and reward all those who teach and support learning;
2. Enhance the teaching skills of all academic staff through a carefully considered and evaluated programme of continuous professional development;
3. Promote teaching and learning through scholarship-informed, and where appropriate, research-informed activities;
4. Promote and share pedagogic innovations both within, and outside the college;
5. Engage students in the mechanisms, processes and procedures developed by the college to enhance their learning opportunities;
6. Ensure that **all** staff, not just those directly involved in teaching, learning and assessment, are trained and supported in ways which will guarantee the effective delivery of this strategy.

4 HE Strategy Objectives

The Higher Education Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Scholarship Strategy is focussed upon six college-wide HE priorities:

SO1. Recognise, value and reward all those who teach and support learning through:

- Integrating quality enhancement initiatives with curriculum delivery;
- Ensuring that the management and evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is embedded closely to the point of delivery;
- Dissemination, sharing and reporting on teaching, learning and scholarship activities, performance and trends.

SO2. Enhance the teaching skills of all academic staff through a carefully considered and evaluated programme of continuous professional development by:

- Ensuring that all staff teaching on HE, regardless of the number of hours, have a continuous Personal Development (CPD) programme aligned to the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education 2011,(see Appendix) which will be inclusive of, but not necessarily limited to:
 - Student-centred teaching and learning;
 - The UK Quality Code for Higher Education and its relevance;
 - The attainment of Higher Education Academy Fellowship;
 - Programme review, validation, monitoring and evaluation;
 - Teaching, learning and assessment strategies in the subject area and how they may differ depending on the level of study and alignment with the FHEQ;
 - The college's peer observational criteria for teaching HE and how it differs from FE delivery;
 - Integrating scholarly activities into teaching and learning, whether subject-based or pedagogic;
 - The writing, monitoring and verification of assessments;
 - Assessment and feedback to HE learners;
 - Evaluating and improving the student learning experience;
 - Using and integrating learning technologies into subject specialisms.

SO3. Promote teaching and learning through scholarship¹-informed, and where appropriate, research²-informed activities by:

- Facilitating staff engagement with scholarship and/or research-informed activities by setting a target, or series of targets, through the college's annual appraisal system with progress reviewed at the end of each year. The type of research/scholarship target(s) set will be dependent upon the amount and nature of the HE delivered and will be agreed by the staff member and their line manager, but should always align with the needs of the curriculum.

¹ For the purposes of this document, scholarship is considered to be any activity which develops staff expertise in their subject area and includes all forms of employer engagement.

² For the purposes of this document, research is considered to be any enquiry activities which result in publication in peer-reviewed journals, conference papers and presentations etc

SO4. Promote and share pedagogic innovations both within, and outside the college by:

- Organising internal staff development events;
- Organising an annual HE conference with attendees from partner HEIs and other external presenters, to include contributions from college HE staff;
- Sharing of practice through peer observation;
- Attendance and contribution to the HE Research Group and HE Forum;
- Promote and engage with external staff development opportunities to create, produce and adapt, engaging, interactive and pedagogically effective learning materials.

SO5. Engage students in the mechanisms, processes and procedures developed by the college to enhance their learning opportunities by:

- Increasing and sustaining student attendance and participation in groups, quality boards, committees and forums across the college and at all levels of management and decision-making;
- Continually evaluating and assessing the effectiveness of the mechanisms used to capture the opinions of students in improving the teaching and learning processes;
- Using student feedback to inform staff development needs and appraisal systems.
- Designing assessments which identify strengths and areas for development in student practice, understanding and achievement;
- Integrating summative and formative assessments to the support of student learning and the development of academic and employability skills;
- Providing prompt, useful and targeted feedback on learners' achievements and diagnosis of strengths and areas for development.

SO6. Ensure that **all** staff, not just those directly involved in teaching, learning and assessment, are trained and supported in ways which will guarantee the effective delivery of this strategy by:

- Integrating Higher Education within cross-college processes, procedures, policies and staff-development activities, and promoting the objectives highlighted within this strategy as part of the college's overall strategic goals;
- Ensuring that assessment modes and methods are linked to intended learning outcomes;
- Allowing students to demonstrate achievement through a variety of assessment methods that makes explicit the criteria against which the demonstration of learning outcomes will be assessed.

5 Management, Evaluation and Strategic Development

The HE Strategy Group provides direction for teaching, learning, assessment and scholarship activities using Key Performance Indicators to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of the college's HE provision, and acts as a proactive and operational body for enhancing teaching, learning and scholarship matters, including quality enhancement and sharing of good practice.

Its Terms of Reference are:

- To enable senior managers to participate in the development of the College's Higher Education Strategy,
- To identify areas for new curriculum development aligned sector priorities and employer needs and coherence of the HE curriculum offer,
- To enable senior managers to report and consult on their areas of work and the impact of local and national initiatives,
- To oversee and ensure that systematic approach is taken to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities,
- To identify appropriate communication strategies for the promotion and marketing of Higher Education ensuring that the information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy,
- To ensure that data and statistics relating to the Key Performance Indicators embedded in the college's strategy documentation is disseminated and used to inform the management of the college's Higher Education provision,
- To confirm that the college's HE provision consistently aligns with national expectations and frameworks,
- To explore, and provide a framework for, the enhancement of learning opportunities.

Key Performance Indicators

- Student success/attainment: e.g. retention, 'drop-out' rates, achievement indicators;
- National Student Survey (NSS) and other student satisfaction survey results;
- Employability and progression statistics;
- Student evaluations and module reviews

References

- QAA Quality Code for Higher Education, (emphasis on Chapter B5 Student Engagement);
- National Student Satisfaction Survey;
- UK Professional Standards Framework in Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education;

6 Appendix: The UK Professional Standards Framework

This diagram has been adapted from information available at <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf>

