

Leeds Beckett University: Education Strategy 2016-21

Introduction

Leeds Beckett University aims to be an excellent, accessible, globally engaged university contributing positively to a thriving Northern economy. Our Mission is to ensure we use our knowledge and resources to make a positive and decisive difference to people, communities and organisations.

One of our core objectives is to provide an **Excellent Education and Experience** for all our students.

We will seek to achieve this objective through three strands of activity:

1. **The Learning Pathway.**

We will enhance teaching and course delivery to further support our students to flourish as independent learners, critical thinkers and capable citizens. The Learning Pathway will support our students' transition into, and through, our University, and focus both upon their sustained development across all levels of learning and their preparation for lifelong learning.

2. **The Student Support Framework.**

We will provide a coherent support environment for our students which encompasses all aspects of their academic, and professional needs (offering specialist personal support when appropriate). Students will have a clear understanding of who to go to for help and advice, and staff will be able to call on the support of colleagues across our University, when an issue moves beyond their area of professional expertise.

3. **Process Reform.**

We will ensure that our Academic Principles and Regulations guarantee the security of the standards of our awards, support enhancement, and fully value academic responsibility and expertise.

Key Performance Indicators:

We will evaluate the excellence of our education and experience through:

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| 1. Our students' satisfaction with their learning and teaching experience.
(National Student Survey: Satisfaction with Teaching) | Target for 2021: 89% |
| 2. Our students' progression through their course.
(HESA Performance Indicator: Progression after one year of study) | Target for 2021: 95% |
| 3. Our students' employment upon graduation.
(Destinations of Leavers in Higher Education Survey) | Target for 2021: 76%
Graduate Employment. |

Other Measures of Success

We will gain a richer understanding of our students' experience by engaging with:

External Examiner Reports	The Student Barometer
Data on Student Progression (all levels)	Postgraduate Taught Student Experience Survey
Data on Student Award Achievement	Module Evaluation Reports
National Student Survey Outcomes	Engagement Data
Destinations of Leavers in Higher Education Survey	Extra-curricular Activity

The Learning Pathway

Our Students will follow a coherent course of study, underpinned by relevant research, which engages them, academically and professionally, builds their self-confidence and develops their expertise in their subject. They will be supported throughout each level of their course (and between undergraduate and postgraduate study) and encouraged to reflect upon their learning experience alongside their academic, professional and personal development. Development of this approach is as much about the way in which we work with our students as about the content of their modules, strengthening a narrative of learning within a coherent course structure.

Level 4: Engagement

Our emphasis at level 4 is upon transition, enabling all students to understand, and meet, the challenges of learning within a University and supporting their success at the next levels of their course. By the end of level 4, students will be oriented and integrated into their learning environment. They will also be fully prepared for the remainder of their courses, with a sound understanding of the key concepts and knowledge required for successful completion. Students will have begun to develop the full range of skills needed to complete their courses and will be engaging confidently both with their course teams and with each other.

Level 5: Contextualisation

Our emphasis at level 5 is upon consolidation and deeper contextualisation. At this intermediate stage students will become more immersed in their subject, and able to reflect critically, both upon its nature and place within their future professional and/or academic lives. Students will begin to deepen and extend their awareness of the academic, professional and personal opportunities available upon graduation and will be supported and encouraged to put their knowledge and skills into practice in an employment-related context.

Level 6: Independence

Our emphasis at level 6 is upon the strengthening and development of independence and the further growth of students as critical thinkers, increasingly knowledgeable and reflective, both about their own academic development and about the research environment of their subject. All students will be offered the opportunity to demonstrate this development, through a sustained piece of work (with a potential for interdisciplinary working) which shows them to be academically and professionally capable. They will be able to demonstrate the application of their knowledge and skills within real-world contexts, as well as exemplifying our University's graduate attributes.

Level 7: Sophistication

Our emphasis at level 7 is upon the transformation of students into sophisticated, independent, critical thinkers, able to apply their knowledge with originality within advanced academic and professional contexts. Level 7 is as much about transition as level 4, and we will support this transition so that all students will become confident in their academic and professional abilities and able to apply their knowledge and skills within complex situations. Through study at this level, students will have a thorough understanding of research, both as a practice and as a product, and be fully prepared for further development in either an academic, or professional, environment.

Development:

Initial development of the Learning Pathway will focus at course level, supported by the Centre for Learning and Teaching and strengthening and sharing good practice from our Schools and academic staff.

The Student Support Framework

The Student Support Framework will build on the creative and supportive learning and teaching environment, fostered within the Learning Pathway, to ensure that all students have access to timely support, at the right place and at the right level. There will be an emphasis on the continuous monitoring and analysis of our students' experience to help to pre-empt problems and to provide support before issues get out of control.

The essence of the Student Support Framework will be to fully define aspects of support, ensure that they are integrated and that communications and monitoring protocols are established that facilitate this integration while respecting the necessary confidentiality of some issues. An important aspect of this development will be the enhancement and further provision of on-line systems to provide support at a distance, and across all time zones.

The Support Framework will be managed between:

Course Support and Advice

Course support and advice will be provided by staff teaching the modules within the course, and by Course Directors (in a wider context). Students will be afforded the opportunity to seek advice outside formally timetabled teaching hours, both face-to-face and electronically, and, in particular, to be guided in their current performance and ways in which this may be improved.

General Academic Advice

Students will have access to an Academic Adviser (a slight re-focusing of our current Personal Tutor role), who can provide more general feedback and advice on academic performance and progression, and ensure that, if needed, they can access more specific support services and learning support opportunities.

General Administrative Advice

Students will have access to designated academic administrators for their course who can support them in the day-to-day aspects of academic administration (such as the submission and return of work, mitigation and registration issues).

Specialist Support

Students will have access to a range of specialist support services, whether within Services for Students or Libraries and Learning Innovation. These services can be accessed directly by individual students, or through referral from other areas of support.

Development

Development of the Student Support Framework will be co-ordinated by Services for Students, working in close liaison with Schools and relevant professional support services.

Process Reform

Review of our Academic Principles and Regulations has already begun, under the co-ordination and leadership of Quality Assurance Services, re-designing the presentation, as well as reviewing both the content, and the operational context, of the regulations themselves. This review will continue through discussion fora and workshops, and will involve all academic and professional support staff colleagues, enhancing the ownership of our quality assurance framework across our University. The aim of our review is to empower staff, students and collaborative partners to engage in excellent academic practice and to foster an enhancement-led culture. The outcome of the review will be a set of Academic Principles and Regulations that ensures the consistent, fair, and equitable maintenance of academic standards, supports enhancement, and delivers both simplicity of process and clarity of outcome.

Phasing of Implementation

There are a number of strands of activity that will support the delivery of our Education Strategy that are already in place. Others are in the early stages of development and will be implemented in the first phases of the strategic planning cycle.

In terms of new development, an initial concentration on levels 4 and 7 will provide a manageable and meaningful focus that will have a real impact on progression, especially, in the first phases of the cycle, and this should enhance both satisfaction and employability as our students progress through their courses. Other aspects of academic development, in particular, can then track the 2017-18 cohort through their life-cycle within our University.

Activity	Timescale		Impact
	Development	Implementation	
Level 4 – Induction and Development	2016-17	2017-18	Progression and Satisfaction
Level 7 - the Research-Informed Teaching Environment	2016-17	2017-18	Satisfaction and Employability
Student Support Framework	2016-17	2017-18	Progression and Satisfaction
Student Retention and Engagement Project (StREAM) - phase 2	(Phase 1 2015-16)	2016-17	Progression and Satisfaction
Enhance Partnership Working: Students' Union and Professional Services	2016-17	2017-18	Satisfaction
Enhanced Module Evaluation (EvaSYS)	2015-16	2016-17	Satisfaction
Higher Education Achievement Report and Graduate Employability	2016-17	2016-18	Satisfaction and Employability
Implement the Student Consultation Framework	2015-16	2016-17	Satisfaction
Implement Enhanced Annual Monitoring	2015-16	2016-17	Progression and Satisfaction
Academic Regulations and Principles Review: Stage 2	2016-17	2017-18	Progression and Satisfaction
Enhance Course Administration and Leadership	2016-18	2017-19	Satisfaction
Improve Course and Module Information	2016-18	2017-19	Satisfaction
Level 5 – Contextualisation and Realistic Working	2017-18	2018-19	Progression, Satisfaction and Employability
Level 6 – Project Development and Interdisciplinarity	2017-18	2018-19	Satisfaction and Employability
Increase Placement Capacity	2017-18	2018-20	Employability
Implement Enhanced Periodic Review	2016-17	2017-18	Progression and Satisfaction
Further Development of Research Informed Teaching Framework	2017-18	2018-21	Satisfaction and Employability