

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX SENATE

Academic Strategy: Teaching and Learning Strategy

1. Introduction

This strategy has been developed as a result of a consultation process with staff and students. It aims to be significantly flexible to adapt to the major changes in the external environment which we believe will affect HE over the next five years. This strategy has informed, and been informed by, the University Strategy *Making the Future* and the Research Strategy. It will inform the development of the Estates, IT, Library, HR and School teaching and learning strategies. It represents our principal driver for enhancement of the student, and staff, experience.

2. Sussex values

Any strategy must reflect the core values of the institution we are seeking to develop. Sussex continues to be:

- a globally renowned institution, which values freedom of expression and encourages debate;
- an engaged institution, which seeks to make a difference in people's lives;
- a creative institution, which seeks to inspire pioneering ideas and new ways of thinking which often transcend disciplinary boundaries;
- an international institution, which seeks to consider issues in a global context, bringing together staff and students from around the world; and
- a place of vitality, diversity, enthusiasm and energy, which nurtures and supports its staff and students.

3. Teaching and learning values

The University of Sussex is committed to:

- maintaining a broad portfolio of academic disciplines from the arts and humanities, social sciences and science;
- enhancing the close relationship between teaching, scholarship and research;
- attracting students of the highest calibre and from a diversity of backgrounds;
- producing graduates who continue to learn through life and are sought after by employers; and
- delivering a student experience which will ensure that current and future students will value their time at the University of Sussex.

4. Characteristics and attributes of the Sussex experience

The University of Sussex provides for its students:

- a high quality education
- membership of a learning community that encourages its students to be part of new understandings and developments in research that reflects the highest standards of academic integrity;
- opportunities to participate in sport, music, drama, the visual arts and other cultural and social activities;
- membership of a community which is internationally focussed and is connected to the dynamic multicultural city of Brighton and Hove; and
- membership of a caring community with high levels of professional and mutual support.

5. Characteristics and attributes of the Sussex graduate

The Sussex experience will produce graduates who typically are:

- able to display effective and sophisticated cognitive, analytical and problem-solving skills and willing to engage with unfamiliar problems and articulate solutions;
- creative and able to use the knowledge they have acquired to generate, develop and realise new ideas and apply a range of creative methods;
- receptive to new ideas and critiques of established wisdom, often within an interdisciplinary context;
- capable of understanding the philosophical and methodological bases of research, including the ethical foundations of scholarship;
- able to participate in individual and collaborative learning in innovative, adaptable and effective ways ;
- able to understand the interaction between members of an enterprise – including leaders – in the public, private and volunteering sectors; and
- aware of civic and social responsibilities and willing to tackle prejudice, injustice and the abuse of power in constructive and responsible ways.

6. Teaching and learning strategy

The University of Sussex will maximise its reputation as a world renowned research-intensive and creatively engaged university by delivering inspirational teaching and learning.

This will be achieved by a focus on the following strategies:

- 6.1. Delivering institutional growth through expansion of degree programmes in areas of significant demand:

We will develop a suite of programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level that are firmly grounded in solid market research in demonstrable areas of student demand. We will develop a robust and holistic planning process for new programmes which will ensure the sustainability of our portfolio and the quality of the student teaching and learning experience.

- 6.2. Developing programmes in response to the changing needs of students, employers and international standards:

Our programmes will recognise the changing needs and demographics of students by providing flexibility in the mode and method of study. We will ensure that our credit system is transparent and aligned to developing European standards. We will pre-empt the needs of employers by creating wide network of advisors from all sectors of the economy – both public and private.

- 6.3. Helping students to develop skills that will equip them for graduate employment and life long learning:

We will provide a curriculum that embeds employability and prepares students to make a positive contribution to their chosen field(s) and to society at large. Our graduates will be reflective and flexible.

- 6.4. Developing access and progress routes for students from all backgrounds:

We will maintain transparent and equitable policies of admission that recognise multiple qualifications for entry and accredit prior learning and work-based learning. We will build upon our relations with key school and colleges and deepen our relations with FE colleges.

- 6.5 Developing recognition and reward systems to encourage teaching, learning and academic excellence:

Our staff remain our most valuable resource and we will recognise and reward contribution and embrace the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. We will develop rigorous and transparent definitions of expected and excellent performance especially in relation to academic leadership and management feel that it is beneficial to their career.

- 6.6 Providing opportunities for professional development in teaching, learning and assessment:

We will provide career development in academic practice for all staff regardless of level.

- 6.7 Introduce a new initiative – SussexPlus – to recognise the commitment and energy of Sussex students:

We will recognise the wide variety of extra-curricula activities that our students already participate in and develop a range of new activities that will enrich the opportunities for all students to further and reflect upon their personal development. We will endeavour to make these some of these opportunities available to our partner colleges as part of our outreach activities.

- 6.8 Build continuous improvement using feedback from the National Student Survey, the International Student Barometer and other mechanisms of student feedback:

- 6.9 Transform the library to improve access to resources and to provide an integrated learning environment

- 6.10 Creatively develop teaching and learning spaces to meet better the needs of staff and students

7. Targets and Key Performance Indicators (for 2015-16)

Target	Performance Measure
Increase the percentage of completing students in graduate-level jobs from 52% to 70%	Destination of Leavers in Higher Education Survey
Increase the number of postgraduate taught students per staff FTE from 3.2 to 4.0	
Increase annual international student fee income from £8m to £17m	
To be placed in the upper quartile of benchmark institutions for the quality and number of applications per undergraduate place	
Exceed national targets for widening access and participation benchmarks	
Increase the average number of national teaching awards and prizes	
Increase the percentage of student satisfaction from 68% to 79% in student surveys	NSS and ISB
Year-on-year improvement in the functional suitability of the teaching and learning infrastructure	

8. Key Risks

Risk	Assessment	Mitigating Action	Officer Responsible
Portfolio fails to attract sufficient number of students	Low/Medium	New planning process	PVC Education
University fails to fill key leadership roles	Low	Review of promotion and reward system	Director HR
University fails to meet WP targets	Low	Integrated and targeted support systems	PVC Education
University fails to respond to changing demands and expectations	Med/High	New mechanisms for data collection and feedback. Good communications with staff and appropriate staff development and support	PVC Education
University fails to meet employability targets	Med/High	Employability Strategy	PVC Education and Head of Careers and Employability

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February 2009