

## Appendix 2 – College Teaching and Learning Strategy and Implementation Plan

### College of Social Science Teaching & Learning Strategy 2014-2016

#### Agreed at CAC 11 February 2014

Working within the University of Leicester's Learning & Teaching Mission Statement - *The University of Leicester is committed to providing the highest-quality education for all its students, enabling them to achieve success in their career paths and make a valuable contribution to society* – the College of Social Science makes a major contribution to the delivery of the University's stated strategic aims and objectives for Learning and Teaching, which state that:

This mission will be underpinned by the following strategic aims, founded on the explicit reaffirmation of the centrality of teaching, jointly with research, to:

- *enrich and value the entirety of the learning experience for all students;*
- *foster the critical intellectual development of all students through guided learning in a research environment;*
- *provide an equivalent experience regardless of mode of learning or learning locations;*
- *celebrate the diversity of the student body as a contribution to learning;*
- *encourage personal reflection and the acquisition of subject-specific and broad-based skills to enable graduates to achieve success in their career paths and make a valuable contribution to society;*
- *emphasise the appointment of senior staff to improve leadership of learning and teaching and develop all staff and enhance and fully utilise the University's physical and virtual resources in order to further these academic purposes.*

These strategic aims are supported by the following objectives to:

- *enhance the University's national and international reputation for excellence in teaching; be recognised nationally and internationally for providing a student learning experience of the highest quality;*
- *build on the University's current position as a major UK provider of PG, distance and flexible education by enhancing the quality of provision;*
- *offer research-led programmes and select students solely on the basis of their potential to succeed academically;*
- *provide our graduates with the skill-sets and ethos to make them a stand-out choice for employers;*
- *develop the University's international reputation for research and innovation in learning and teaching;*
- *recognise and fully reward the contributions of staff and students to the attainment of these objectives.*

#### COLLEGE CONTEXT

The College of Social Science will seek to align its activities with the action points identified in the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy 2011-2016:

*1. develop ways of working that foster students' active engagement with their learning and career progression and that facilitate their contribution to the design and delivery of their programmes.*

By ensuring maximum student representation and participation in departmental and college structures and processes, providing induction and support for those students who take on active roles in such activities and proactively seeking student opinion.

*2. enhance curricula, being attentive to internationalisation, sustainability and skills development, including transferable skills.*

By being creative in programme design, having due regard to the University's equal opportunity responsibilities and seeking to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between all people, being responsive to known employer demand for skills, embedding employability in the curriculum and mindful of relevant available market research.

*3. enhance the provision, scope, flexibility, sustainability and delivery of taught programmes.*

By maintaining student staff ratios at appropriate levels; by encouraging fresh initiatives in creative course development, including DL programmes; making maximum use of support mechanisms, in particular technological advances in the delivery of programmes; and valuing learning innovation.

*4. improve students' breadth and level of achievement.*

By maximising use of non-credit bearing elements of the student experience and working consistently towards improved completion rates and higher proportions of first and upper second awards at UG degree level, and increased numbers of merit and distinction awards at UG Certificate and PG levels.

*5. achieve a shared understanding with students of what they can expect to receive in terms of academic support, contact and resources and to contribute in terms of their own investment of effort.*

By offering clear statements of the levels of academic and personal tutor support which will be provided and by working closely with students towards their academic and personal development and to develop new structures.

*6. improve the employability of graduates by being mindful of the requirements of employers and with a renewed emphasis on students' securing graduate level employment.*

By embedding, and making explicit, key employability skills within the curriculum, and assisting students to recognise their relevance and deploy them (including those developed through paid employment); by developing opportunities for work-related learning, and by emphasising the value of extra-curricular employability-related activities.

*7. provide high quality student facilities and services.*

By ensuring maximum student awareness and use of departmental and central University support services.

*8. foster engagement with research into learning and teaching as means of underpinning the enhancement of educational programmes and the University's reputation as a leader in this field.*

By ensuring staff awareness of relevant pedagogical research in relation to their field of teaching, including online components in taught programmes, distance, online and blended learning.

*9. formalise career paths and implement promotion procedures that recognise and reward the contributions made by staff to the development and direction of teaching excellence.*

By encouraging and supporting staff to participate in relevant training; to take full advantage of University schemes which reward teaching excellence; and to utilise promotion routes that recognise excellent teaching and leading on learning.

*10. enhance quality assurance and enhancement processes.*

By ensuring that all departments fully engage in QA processes requiring systematic reflection on quality indicators with a view to ongoing improvement and enhancement of teaching provision and being mindful of the QAA context, which will include a commitment to the professional development of teaching staff.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY 2014-16

In order to address the above points in concrete terms, the College of Social Science and its constituent departments will act as follows, reviewing the action points listed below during the academic years 2014-16:

1. Review the level and quality of student participation in decision-making structures within departments on an annual basis at relevant Academic meetings in the spring of each year.

Receive an annual report from the student representative on the College Academic Committee on the implications for the College of a review of all Staff-Student Committee minutes.

2. Conduct an annual check at departmental and college level through the Equal Opportunities Committee and Equal Opportunities College Officer to ensure that all learning and teaching activities in the College avoid unlawful discrimination, harassment and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 and by the University's Equal Opportunity Statement.

Audit and extend opportunities for engagement in issues of sustainability.

Continue to incorporate employability and transferable skills into programmes and delivery.

3. Work with the Division of External Affairs to identify market opportunities for the development of new courses and potential enhancement of existing curriculum.

Encourage at least one application from within the College to each round of awards made through the Teaching Enhancement Project Fund.

Deploy the College's learning technologists, in order to take a leading role within course development of the application of new learning technologies in close co-operation with the University's learning innovation strategy and e-learning/DL developments.

Remain attentive to, and act upon, Widening Participation and broader issues of cultural diversity and service to the local community in recruitment and course design.

4. Encourage maximum participation by College students in, and actively increase the numbers of applications made for, the Leicester Award and the College Employability Prize.

Participate fully in the use of HEARs (Higher Education Achievement Reports) for students involved in the scheme at any time and continued deployment of PDP (Personal Development Planning), or any equivalent arrangements, across departments, as a means of students reflecting on own learning and experience.

5. Make available full KIS (Key Information Sets) data for each department and review the data annually to ensure that appropriate adjustments are made.

Monitor, and where necessary improve, the effectiveness of personal tutor systems via the ADR (Annual Development Review) process.

6. Share good practice about employability issues and improve DLHE (Destination of Leavers from Higher Education) scores for individual departments.

Work with the University Career Development Service to ensure a co-ordinated approach to careers management and employability for students across the college through EPAs (Employability Partnership Agreements), including increasing the involvement of employers within departments/College.

7. Continue work on maximising NSS scores in individual departments, paying particular direct attention to areas of departmental work which scored below 75%.

Contribute proactively to University-wide discussion and decision-making on teaching spaces and the constraints imposed on learning to ensure that space is fit for the specific purpose of College of Social Science student learning needs.

Work collaboratively with central services, including the Library, in the design of services, not just of physical facilities but also of the curriculum, e.g. by embedding information literacy skills in the curriculum.

8. To support academic staff to apply for Fellowship of the HEA (Higher Education Academy) at the relevant levels, through a College policy and consequent strategies.

To take full advantage of tutor/lecturer training and support made available through the Academic Practice Service.

To collaborate fully with work undertaken in and through the Institute of Learning Innovation in the interests of College and University initiatives and developments in DL and e-learning.

To encourage engagement with pedagogic research through the Learning and Teaching Forum of the College.

9. To encourage greater numbers of College staff applications for University Teaching Fellowships.

To continue to recognise and reward, and encourage the number of, students who contribute to the teaching and learning of fellow students, for example through Teaching Partnership Awards.

10. To continue to use ADRs to ensure annual monitoring of the processing of external examiner comments and suggestions.

To respond to student evaluations in a timely and measured manner.