

Equality Analysis (EA)

Learning & Teaching Enhancement Office

Learning & Teaching Strategy AND Diversity in the Curriculum

A. Policy/practice details

1. The title of the policy being analysed.

Learning and Teaching Strategy *and* Diversity and Equality in the Curriculum

2. Please explain the main purpose of the policy being analysed.

The two areas have been reviewed together, so as to avoid repetitive information in separate analyses reports.

The Learning and Teaching Strategy is set once every three to five years, alongside other strategies (research, for instance) as part of the overarching corporate strategy, which sets the direction, values and vision of the university's activities. The Learning and Teaching Strategy in particular, sets out the nature and direction of education envisaged at Bath. The Strategy steers the implementation of new developments, characteristics of provision we wish to sustain or develop and focus the way the university will deal with upcoming challenges and demands from wider society.

Alongside the Learning and Teaching Strategy sits a set of performance indicators that are used to evaluate the success of the strategy annually, and an operational plan sets out how in practice the university intends to achieve the goals stated in the strategy.

The Learning and Teaching Strategy can be found here:

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/learningandteaching/UoBLearningTeachingStrategy0910-1112.pdf>

It should be noted that we are in the final year of the current strategy and it is proposed to extend this for another year. In 2013/14 all strategies are to be revised and at this point opportunities will arise to address any aspects that may result from this equality analysis.

Diversity and Equality in the Curriculum (L&T processes)

There is no single policy within the university on this aspect. There are a number of provisions and policies in place relating to students' ability to attend study (Fitness to Practise, Fitness to Study, disability support arrangements and related policies), but as these are subject to separate analyses, these have not been reviewed as part of this analysis. The focus of this analysis is the development, approval and regular review of programmes (curricula) in relation to equality and diversity issues. In terms of formal policy documentation reference was made to QA3 (Approval of New Programmes of study) and QA13 (Degree Scheme Reviews) but more importantly to the current governance structures and (approval and review) committee practices.

3. Who will be affected?

For both of these areas of policy/ strategy, both staff and students are affected, including student applicants.

4. Aspects of the policy that particularly impact on equality and diversity.

Diversity in the Curriculum: All programmes across the institution; both taught and research.

Learning and Teaching Strategy

- E-learning and learning spaces

- Assessment and feedback strategies as proposed or reviewed in programme approval or degree scheme review. Development of pathways for students who face particular challenges as a result of any of the protected characteristics, most usually disability or ethnic/ cultural background
- Teaching quality, in particular inclusive teaching methods and inclusive teaching organisation

Also affected are the following areas which are covered in separately scheduled Equality Analyses:

- Recruitment and admissions (scheduled for separate WA in 2013)
- Placement and Work-based learning (separate EA in 2012 by Faculty of Science)
- Induction (separate EA scheduled for 2012 by Student Services –first year student experience)
- Academic Support (separate EA in 2013 by LTEO and Personal tutorial system in 2013 by Student Services)

B. Analysis

5. Please indicate evidence used and the process by which you have arrived at your conclusions.

- a review of the written curriculum development related policies (Quality Assurance Code of Practice) and Learning and Teaching Strategy itself (specifically for clarity on institutional steer and values of equality and diversity)
- discussion with those who drafted the policies/strategy (PVC Learning and Teaching, Head of Student Learning Experience and Quality)
- responses by members of the Directors of Studies Forum against six questions (see appendix), drafted on the basis of information retrieved from contact with the Equality Challenge Unit (www.ecu.ac.uk). These questions covered both the L&T strategy and the Curriculum aspect. The membership of the Directors of Studies Forum included chairs of relevant committees (Academic Programme Committee, Programmes and Partnerships Approval Committee and departmental Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees)
- responses from Academic Representatives (students) through the SU's Academic Council, again using the six questions as above,
- responses from the SU's Diversity and Support Executive (academic reps) in relation to both the strategy and curriculum policies
- The six questions were also sent to the LGTB Forum (with thanks to Marlene Bertrand) and SODS, but no responses were received from these sources.
- Review of all minutes and papers of the Programme And Partnership Approvals Committee (PAPAC) since 2010.

6. Risk of adverse impact on protected groups.

	High impact	Medium impact	Low impact
Age			X
Disability		X	
Gender			X
Pregnancy/Maternity			X
Race/ethnicity	X		

Religion/belief			X
Sexual Orientation			X
Transgender			X
Marriage/civil partnership			X

C. Mitigating potential adverse impact

7. Conclusions and recommendations for amendments to the policy/practice.

Please give an outline of the key actions based on any gaps, challenges, priorities and opportunities you have identified.

For brevity, only those findings that required action are listed.

Diversity in the Curriculum

From reviewing all papers and minutes from APC since its inception two years ago it appears that due attention is given to equality and diversity. In particular it is clear that in the process of approval diverse teaching and assessment approaches are expected, and there is a good emphasis on support structures being in place for various needs. In relation to inclusivity this would mainly affect students with disabilities and international students (including thereby race/ethnicity groups).

Although there are no indications of major concerns from student feedback or the responses from Directors of Studies, it was noted that there are no explicit criteria used in relation to diversity and equality and this would be advisable for inclusion in the next review of the processes for programme and unit proposal and approval.

Proposals are underway to engage in review of assessment and feedback practices by each of the disciplines and as part of this process –should this be agreed- equality and diversity criteria are desirable.

Action1: Director of LTEO

One element mentioned by Directors of Studies is the need for more clarity on how to support students with a pattern of chronic illness (but who are not registered as disabled) that affect the speed with which they can engage in assessment (timing across their study rather than duration of examination). Deferred assessments –be it for students with chronic patterns of illness or otherwise- were also felt to disadvantage some students more than was reasonable (deferring assessments can lead to deferral of a year of study too easily). It is felt that the (NFA) expectations are too rigid for some groups and this may need further consideration.

The issue of how to deal with chronic illnesses that do not qualify as a disability also arose in relation to dealing with Individual Mitigating Circumstances. More guidance is requested here.

Action 2: Deputy Academic Registrar

Directors of Studies also suggested more information might be beneficial in advance of the presence of any students who might legitimately require additional support, be it due to disabilities, ethnicity, part or full time status or otherwise. This would be of specific help to

personal tutors (in this context insight into UCAS forms was suggested), but also to general teaching staff.

Action 3: Head of Student Services and Deputy Academic Registrar

Student reps pointed out that in one particular programme, the taught materials and teaching only included western models and examples, which meant a number of international students could not relate to it. The Director of Learning and Teaching Enhancement will take this up with the relevant Director of Studies.

Action 4: Director of LTEO and relevant Director of Studies

Learning and Teaching Strategy

Staff and student reps were of a view that equality and diversity in learning, teaching and the curriculum is not explicitly communicated by senior leaders in the university. The university stance was understood in principle, but was felt to be mostly implicit.

Examples of where more clarity might be preferable were mostly related to inclusion of international students (ranging from visa and immigration to increasing integration of students of different ethnic groups and cultures) and policy in relation to students affected by disability (see below).

Both aspects should be more explicitly addressed when drafting the next Learning and Teaching Strategy and when planning the wider communication of this.

Action 5: PVC (Learning & Teaching)

Student reps identified a need for policy clarity in relation to making lecture notes available for disabled students and also others. This was felt to be a matter of inclusivity, as it would enable all students to take part in lectures more effectively. The suggestion was to expect all staff to provide notes/ materials in advance of their teaching as a matter of course.

It is already the case that students with a disability can request materials in advance and should be given these on request. The current position is that other than in cases of requests related to disability, the use and sharing of notes are a matter of discretion for the lecturer involved. This issue is highly contentious and would require a considerable change of staff views within the university before progress towards a wider reaching policy can be made.

Until then, the current position may benefit from further clarification in handbooks, at induction and similar.

Action 6: Director of LTEO

Student representatives raised issues around clarity of verbal teaching activities when staff were not native English speakers and students were also of an international background. The support structures for teaching staff are in place and can be accessed by staff when required. It appears worthwhile making sure that Heads of Departments and Directors of Studies are aware of this support.

Academic Reps also raised that the use of Facebook by departments causes a problem for students of Chinese nationality, as they are unable to access materials on Facebook when they are studying from home. Moreover the use of Facebook is contentious for Chinese students, whilst Moodle offers a viable alternative option for dissemination of materials. It appears worthwhile ensuring Directors of Studies are aware of this issue so departments can take appropriate action.

Action 7: Director of LTEO (to make Heads of Departments and

Directors of Studies aware of both issues)

8. Timescale for implementation of changes or introduction of new policy.

Action		Timescale
1	Inclusivity of assessment and feedback	Proposals for assessment and feedback reviews to ULTQC in 2012
2	Regulations and chronic illness issues	Deputy Academic Registrar to advise Summer 2012
3	Provision of student data	To be advised (Registry/ Student Services)
4	Inclusive use of models and examples in a particular programme	immediately
5	L&T Strategy clarity on E&D	2012/13 (development of new L&T strategy)
6	Lecture notes policy	May/June 2012 for handbooks 2012/13
7	Understandable verbal teaching activity/Use of Facebook	Before end of AY 2011/12

D. Publication

9. Final reporter:

Gwen van der Velden, Director of Learning and Teaching Enhancement

10. Date:

29 April 2012

11. Review date:

Appendix: Six questions in relation to Equality and Diversity in the curriculum and the Learning and Teaching Strategy

Curriculum:

- 1) Do you feel that the Institution's vision for equality and diversity in the curriculum is clear and understood by all staff and students and championed by senior management?
- 2) Do your Programmes
 - a) ensure learning is student-centred and interactive, engaging all students through a range of methods and encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning experience?
 - b) provide a range of flexible learning and teaching approaches that take account of the diversity of students?
 - c) utilise learning materials resources and information technology systems which are non-discriminatory, socially and culturally diverse and fully accessible?
 - d) ensure curriculum content is sensitive and varied, informed by different social and cultural perspectives and builds on students' educational interests, experiences and aspirations?
- 3) Are a range of flexible formative and summative assessment and feedback approaches routinely used in order to maximise opportunities for students' learning and provide more than one way for a student to demonstrate they have met learning outcomes or competence standards?

Learning and Teaching Strategy

- 4) Does your department actively consider inclusivity and supporting diversity when implementing aspects of the learning and teaching strategy?

This may for instance relate to the implementation of new assessment rules and regulations (NFA) or feedback practices, the way the department endeavours to achieve better NSS scores, the introduction of the new personal tutorial system, revises placement support or peer mentoring?

- 5) Are you aware of any Equality and Diversity related obstacles for staff or students in contributing to the development or implementation of the university learning and teaching strategy, due to the governance structures used for this (consultation processes, committees taking decisions, reviews and development projects)?
- 6) Are there aspects of the Learning and Teaching Strategy which you think are less inclusive or supportive of diversity than they should be?