UNIVERSITY OF BATH EDUCATION STRATEGY 2016-2021

As we enter our 50th anniversary year and look to the future, aware of the changing external policy environment, we are launching our new Education Strategy. By utilising our significant strengths and demonstrating agility and responsiveness to the changing global environment, we will build on our existing high quality learning, teaching and student experience, ensuring our shared principles of excellence in education remain at the heart of all that we do.

Excellence in Education for us means:

* Our teaching is inspiring and highly valued, delivered through a focused range of curricula that are academically rigorous, research-driven and practice-based.
* Our learning is enhanced through high-quality spaces, effective technologies, and support for students’ active participation.
* Our community is inclusive, supportive and engaged, enriched by the diverse and international backgrounds of our students and staff.
* Our students are empowered to make positive contributions to society — locally, nationally or internationally — through attributes including awareness, understanding, reflection and intellectual curiosity.
* Our graduates have high levels of personal, professional, and academic skills enabling them to fulfil their potential and thrive in their chosen employment.

Our strengths in education derive from:

* An ethos which promotes excellence in learning and teaching, encourages collegiality, and values contributions from all our students and staff.
* A portfolio of core disciplines which engage our students in developing the academic and professional skills, expertise and experience necessary for both professional practice and research.
* Our student experience, which draws together academic, pastoral, social and extra-curricular provision, enriched through excellent facilities and supportive staff.
* Our long standing placement provision and employer relationships, which help provide personal and professional development, experience and networks for our students and keep us attuned to needs of the international professional environment.
* Our engagement with students which informs our strategic decision-making and is enhanced by our close partnership with our Students’ Union.
* Our research, which is integral to our teaching and enriches our learning environment.
* A sense of belonging which brings together our staff and students in a secure, mutually-supportive and respectful community.
* Our international partnerships, outlook, engagement and study abroad opportunities, which help equip our students with the awareness and skills to promote positive change in an increasingly globalised world.

Objectives

The objectives of our Education Strategy are contextualised by our shared understanding of excellence in education, by our strengths in learning and teaching, and by the University’s overall strategic direction. Aware of the need to develop dynamic programmes and structures, our objectives are necessarily active and flexible, enabling us to be pro-active in response to new opportunities and challenges arising from the changing Higher Education environment.

Our 10 major objectives are to:

1. Develop a flexible framework for the strategic expansion of our postgraduate provision.

* We will develop graduate programmes (at both masters and doctoral level) that are innovative and sustainable and we will review our existing provision to ensure its continued effectiveness.
* We will ensure our administrative structures, regulatory frameworks and student support are aligned to the University’s strategic direction.
* We will develop innovative approaches to distance learning in postgraduate education.

1. Transform our curricula and approaches to assessment, particularly where this will have rich and positive impacts, such as in our postgraduate taught programmes and in the first year of our undergraduate programmes.

* We will review our curricula, programme structures, and modes of delivery, underpinning our approaches with high quality teaching and appropriate and sustainable resourcing.
* We will review and seek to diversify our forms of formative and summative assessment, underpinning our approaches with a revised academic framework.
* We will seek to de-couple undergraduate and postgraduate learning and assessment.

1. Support our staff who teach as they develop their skills, curricula and careers.

* We will recognise excellent teaching through reward, promotion and investment in innovation.
* We will encourage and enable our staff who teach to undertake professional teaching development opportunities within and outside the University.
* We will ensure that the support for excellent learning and teaching by professional services is pro-active and aligned to University objectives.

1. Ensure that our technologies and facilities support our strategic priorities for learning and teaching.

* We will ensure our technology-enhanced teaching is aligned to the University Strategy through implementation of clearly articulated support strategies.
* We will develop creative and innovative teaching delivery and learning activities in light of new technologies, available spaces and the needs of our students.
* We will continue to invest in high quality physical and virtual learning and teaching facilities and resources to enhance the student educational experience.

1. Engage our students as active partners in their education.

* We will ensure students are supported to engage effectively with their academic programmes of study and wider opportunities.
* In partnership with the Students’ Union, we will further develop ways to enable an informed student community to enhance their learning experience.
* We will take steps to encourage all our students to engage in the student representative process.

1. Enhance placement, practice-based and international opportunities in our curricula.

* We will continue to develop our placements portfolio and encourage students to take UK and international placements, offering effective skills preparation and support.
* We will continue to invest in our support for placement and study abroad opportunities and employer engagement activities.
* We will introduce a new Placements Information Management System, which will integrate study abroad information in order to support students more effectively.

1. Embed student opportunities for academic, professional, and personal skills development to support the attributes of a Bath graduate.

* We will articulate what is distinctive about University of Bath graduates in order to highlight their attributes and enhance their opportunities.
* We will further embed skills development opportunities within our curricula.
* We will ensure that the skills provision offered by our professional services is high quality, co-ordinated and relevant to the needs of our diverse student community.

1. Understand the needs and aspirations of our diverse student communities in order to inform our strategic approach, inclusive curriculum development and student support.

* We will continue to develop our wide range of support for students, including personal tutoring, peer mentoring, peer-assisted learning and pastoral support to encourage resilience and independent learning.
* We will ensure greater consistency in the graduate and international student experience, by reference to our undergraduate and home student benchmarks.
* We will take steps to understand and, as appropriate, address international and BME attainment disparities.

1. Respond to the need for clearer student communication and information.

* We will ensure that all our student information is clear, consistent and accurate.
* We will ensure that student regulations, guidance and instructions are accessible, understandable and appropriate to their contexts.
* We will improve our communication with students, as a key element of our partnership with the student body.

1. Embrace the positive potential of challenging ourselves to think creatively about how we deliver excellence in education.

* We will embrace the opportunities of the changing internal and external environments by refocusing our activities and processes to ensure our practice is responsive, agile, flexible, and aligned to University priorities.
* We will review our academic framework and approaches to programme development to ensure they are dynamic, research-informed, and responsive to student and employer needs.
* We will adopt a more risk-based, proportionate, and meaningful approach to quality assurance.