

MANCHESTER
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The University of Manchester

Strategy for
TEACHING,
LEARNING &
STUDENTS

Faculty of

BIOLOGY, MEDICINE

AND HEALTH

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OUR MISSION FOR TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENTS IS:

To deliver high-quality educational programmes that inspire, prepare and transform future generations of leaders, healthcare professionals, innovators, educators and researchers and that all have student experience at their heart.

CONTEXT

The Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health (FBMH) offers a comprehensive portfolio of leading-edge programmes that spans the full discovery science to healthcare delivery spectrum.

Our 17 undergraduate (UG), 94 postgraduate taught (PGT) programmes and multiple short courses for continuing professional development (CPD) are delivered across our three Schools, as well as in collaboration with other Schools in the University and external partners including the NHS and industry.

DIVERSE

Our population of more than 8,000 UG and 2,700 PG students range from school leavers to established healthcare professionals, are from diverse socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds and come to study with us from across the globe.

The scale and breadth of our provision enables all Faculty academic colleagues to contribute their expertise across traditional discipline and professional boundaries and thereby ensure that our teaching is research-informed, excellent in its delivery and enhances all aspects of the experience of our vibrant student population.

HEALTH

In addition, the alignment of the Faculty's ambitions with those of Health Innovation Manchester as enabled by the Government's devolution of the £6 billion health and social care budget to Greater Manchester is creating a unique infrastructure and environment for improving the health and well-being of our local population.

This alignment provides distinctive opportunities for our students to engage in innovative and transformative health improvement activities as part of their educational programmes and for our Faculty to be a key contributor to capacity and capability strategies across the City.

CHALLENGES

There are challenges however in our continuing to ensure that all FBMH programmes are of the highest standard. The expectations of external regulatory and legislative bodies are increasing against a backdrop of uncertainty across the Higher Education (HE) landscape.

Notably, The Office for Students emphasises the 'value for money' of education, particularly from the student point of view, which may mean a move towards shorter more flexible degree programmes, distance learning and degree apprenticeships. There may also be a cap on tuition fees requiring that institutions deliver teaching more efficiently whilst enhancing

and evidencing, through a range of externally published metrics, high quality standards, student retention, employability, widening participation, degree attainment, individualised learning and student wellbeing

BEHAVIOUR

There is already evidence of a change in student applicant behaviour following the publication of institutional level Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) designations and this is likely to be more pronounced with the progress of subject level TEF. Further, the Competition and Markets Authority now requires greater transparency and closer adherence to advertised programme specifications than before.

We are therefore operating in an increasingly competitive and regulated environment where students have more choice in where to study, have more choice in their mode of study, are better informed and are more sensitised to value and price.

To meet the challenges of the current HE environment, our FBMH strategy for Teaching, Learning and Students (TL&S) is designed to build on the current strengths of our provision but also to enhance the distinctiveness and excellence of our offer from registration to graduation.

In addition, our strategy does need to be agile in order to respond to rapid changes in the HE environment. As such, more detailed strategic and operational plans are being developed and reviewed continuously to address key areas such as student employability, internationalisation, differential attainment and flexible learning.

STANDARDS

Recognising the need to drive a forward-looking approach to TL&S across our Faculty, we have established an Academy for Education and Professional Development with the aim of continuously improving the standards of current and future provision and to ensure that we are all equipped to face the challenges ahead.

The Academy's Staff Development Programme is designed so that all those who are engaged in the development and delivery of our programmes - including academic and Professional Support Services (PSS) colleagues - from our Faculty and our education partners, can enhance their management and delivery of teaching, contribute to new programme developments, share best practice and promote sound educational pedagogy.

Through the Academy there will also be on-going opportunities for all staff to input into the further development and delivery of our Faculty strategy for TL&S.

To achieve our mission, this strategy for TL&S is built on six integrated themes:

- i) who we teach;
- ii) what we teach;
- iii) T&L delivery and management;
- iv) supporting our staff;
- v) supporting our students; and,
- vi) student employability and further study.

This is a high-level summary of the strategy. Progress against key performance indicators for each component of each theme is being monitored to ensure that we are aligned to internal and external measures of excellence.



STRATEGIC THEMES AND AIMS

1 WHO WE TEACH

OUR AIM:

Our admission and selection processes will reduce barriers to study, attract motivated and informed students, identify students of high potential and commitment, increase student diversity and ensure recruitment to target.

To achieve this we will:

- Set ambitious student number targets that are informed by professional market intelligence, capacity considerations (including placement availability) and workforce need but that do not compromise the high quality of our educational and entry standards;
- Deliver an effective and coordinated student recruitment campaign that includes establishing education and research partnerships with key international institutions, expanding the scale and scope of our international summer school portfolio and proactive engagement with local and national educational institutions through bespoke visits, targeted outreach events and open days;

- Provide information about our diverse portfolio of programmes that is tailored, accurate and accessible to prospective applicants from diverse backgrounds and of differing levels of prior education at all our recruitment events, in our online and print materials and in response to ad hoc enquiries;
- Ensure that our selection criteria and processes are inclusive, holistic, fair, transparent and values-based so as to increase student diversity and promote widening participation;
- Adapt our recruitment and selection processes based on rigorous analysis of subsequent student outcomes including their retention, attainment and compliance with professional standards;
- Maximise the efficiency of our admission processes and enhance conversion through, for example, taster events and offer holder days to ensure we recruit to target within an increasingly competitive environment;
- Engage our leading educators, health professionals, researchers and student ambassadors in all recruitment, selection and conversion activities to authenticate the distinctive aspects of our programmes, the broader opportunities available to our students and the expectations of those undertaking our programmes.



2 WHAT WE TEACH

OUR AIM:

Our UG, PGT and CPD portfolio of programmes will be distinctive, research-informed, progressive and transformative and span the full discovery science to healthcare delivery spectrum

To achieve this we will:

- Regularly and rigorously review the scope, content and focus of our provision with input from subject, education and market experts, students, employers, regulators/accreditors and where applicable, patients and members of the public to ensure that our programmes are:
 - Educationally sound and with up-to-date curricula that meet the requirements of regulatory/accrediting bodies and equip our graduates with the skills, knowledge and attributes for employment or future study;
 - Designed to inspire and motivate students, encourage their independent, critical and reflective approaches to study and include opportunities for interdisciplinary learning;
 - Adapted in content to reflect changes to current and prospective workplace practices;
 - Informed by market intelligence as well as local and global workforce needs;
- Develop and deliver flexible and entry-level foundation programmes, MOOCs and standalone CPD options to enable prospective students of differing levels of prior education to access higher education and to undertake higher degrees;
- Expand our CPD portfolio by building on the breadth of our current UG and PGT provision and the introduction of flexible learning packages to support local and global workforce transformation;
- Embed in our programmes opportunities and support for students to develop their technical and information skills so that they become highly digitally literate and well-equipped for employment in a digital economy;
- Provide students with opportunities to learn about, discuss and critique research findings, research approaches and research-informed practice, as well as, to conduct their own research and thereby inspire and prepare the next generation of researchers;
- Ensure that through our programmes, student understanding of local and global issues affecting the environment, health and wellbeing is enhanced, that their assumptions are challenged, autonomous thinking is encouraged and their engagement with the Faculty strategy for Social Responsibility is promoted;
- Capitalise on the alignment of ambitions of the Faculty, the devolution of Greater Manchester's health and social care budget, and of Health Innovation Manchester in the development and delivery of a synergistic and distinctive capacity and capability building strategy that includes our students engaging in innovative and transformative health improvement activities as part of their educational programmes.

3 TEACHING AND LEARNING DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT

OUR AIM:

All of our UG, PGT & CPD programmes will be sustainable, efficiently managed, appropriately resourced and delivered to the highest educational standards by enthusiastic and inspirational subject experts to ensure that all of our students have an outstanding educational experience

To achieve this we will:

- Review and define, on an on-going basis, T&L management structures and the roles and responsibilities of all those staff - academic and PSS - who contribute to the delivery of our programmes to ensure that lines of accountability are clear, processes are streamlined and transparent to both staff and students, succession planning is embedded and that we are agile in response to internal and external strategic priorities;

- Deliver a comprehensive teaching contribution system that provides quantitative and transparent data on relative staff contributions to our T&L provision and an evidence base to inform:
 - the development of systems to distribute teaching equitably and according to the expertise of our staff;
 - the modelling of relative teaching intensity across our provision to identify programmes or programme components that require either enhancement or streamlining;
 - the flow of finance such that programmes and their delivery are sufficiently and equitably resourced;

- Increase efficiency by simplifying and standardising the structures, assessments, content and delivery of our programmes to facilitate shared provision that is of the highest quality;

- Actively promote opportunities for all staff to contribute their knowledge, skills and expertise to enthuse and inspire our students across traditional discipline and programme boundaries;

- Embed state-of-the-art teaching methodology of proven efficacy into all our programmes that includes the use of digital technology and an appropriate balance of face-to-face, blended and online learning to enhance delivery of our current T&L portfolio and its expansion internationally;

- Deploy Faculty quality assurance and enhancement processes that are inextricably linked and underpin a continuous cycle of improvement across our provision that is monitored against transparent and challenging internal and external quality measures.

- Encourage and support high quality pedagogic research, the evaluation of innovative teaching methodologies and the introduction of state-of-the-art teaching practice across all our programmes;

- Establish an effective and constructive peer review process that guides staff to reflect on and raise the standards of their teaching practice;

- Support our educators to evidence their teaching excellence through acquiring accredited teaching and learning credentials, internal and external awards and, thereby, enhance their career progression.

4 SUPPORTING OUR STAFF

Academy
FOR EDUCATION
& PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

OUR AIM:

All staff engaged in the delivery and management of our programmes will be supported to enhance and evidence the quality of their contributions in an environment that promotes, values and recognises teaching excellence and outstanding student support.

To achieve this we will:

- Deliver, through the Academy, an engaging staff training and development programme that equips members of our Faculty and of our education partners to drive improvements in T&L in a concerted and structured manner;
- Adapt the content and focus of the Academy's training and development programme in response to changes to the T&L landscape, advances in pedagogy, student feedback and internal and external strategic priorities including, for example, the requirements of the national Teaching Excellence Framework;
- Establish Best Practice Hubs to provide a focus for the development of best practice guidance and for the sharing of resources in key cross-cutting areas such as assessment design and feedback, e-learning, digital literacy, inter-professional learning, bioethics, data handling and patient and public involvement in T&L;

- Encourage and support high quality pedagogic research, the evaluation of innovative teaching methodologies and the introduction of state-of-the-art teaching practice across all our programmes;
- Establish an effective and constructive peer review process that guides staff to reflect on and raise the standards of their teaching practice;
- Support our educators to evidence their teaching excellence through acquiring accredited teaching and learning credentials, internal and external awards and, thereby, enhance their career progression.





5 SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS

OUR AIM:

Our students will be supported to achieve their full potential in a caring environment that guides their personalised learning, values their opinions, addresses their concerns and supports their wellbeing

To achieve this we will:

- Embed a Faculty-wide academic advisory system that guides students to identify achievable goals, supports their personalised learning and enhances their core skills development;
- Analyse, in a rigorous and systematic manner, instances of differential attainment to identify its source and inform the provision of appropriate and targeted student support;
- Couple the provision of formative and summative assessments with constructive and informative feedback across all programmes so that, in addition to charting student progress, we can encourage and support the development and individual aspirations of all our students;
- Ensure that all students have routes to raise concerns relating to all aspects of their experience of our provision either individually, via effective student representation, student staff liaison committees or focus groups;
- Listen, empathise and respond to all student concerns in a polite and constructive manner and provide feedback on how each concern has been addressed;
- Ensure that all students have access to appropriate personal support and that they understand that by accessing this support they will not prejudice their academic and/or professional progress;
- Equip all staff with the skills to recognise the wellbeing and disability support needs of students and how they can facilitate student engagement with support services in a timely manner.

6 STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY AND FURTHER STUDY

OUR AIM:

Our graduates will have the skills, knowledge and attributes to enhance their employability, inform their career choices and advance their individual career aspirations through lifelong learning

To achieve this we will:

- Embed challenging work-based placements in our educational programmes such so that students can apply and evidence the knowledge, skills and professional attributes that they have gained and thereby their readiness for employment and/or further study;
- Encourage students to enhance their transferrable skills through participation in the University's leadership, volunteering and extracurricular programme – *Stellify* – and to evidence their achievements in their individual Higher Education Achievement Report;
- Enable students, where appropriate to their degree programme, to undertake optional interdisciplinary units offered by the University College for Interdisciplinary Learning so as to broaden their intellectual and cultural knowledge;
- Integrate into all of our educational programmes opportunities for students to engage with employers, high profile alumni and inspirational role models to inform their career aspirations, broaden their knowledge of employment options and to consider the value of further study;
- Ensure that Academic Advisors have appropriate training to undertake detailed discussions with their advisees about career preparation, employment and future learning, as well as, how they can access career enhancing resources and activities.

A 'LIVING' STRATEGY

Our delivery of this strategy against an uncertain higher education sector backdrop will be challenging and requires the active, on-going input and commitment of all members of the Faculty.

Currently, there are many opportunities for Faculty members to contribute their expertise – from informing reviews of our T&L portfolio to engaging with the staff development activities of our Academy for Education and Professional Development.

Individually we can all take personal responsibility for improving the experience of each student with whom we interact. Collectively we need to drive improvements whilst being agile in the face of change. Hence this strategy needs to be *'living'*.

