



Higher Education: Teaching and Learning Strategy

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Teaching & Learning Strategy 2014

1. Introduction

As a University Centre our focus is squarely on teaching, learning and learner experience. The University Centre will provide to those who wish to engage in an extensive range of vocationally directed curriculum, adding value to new or established careers. Teaching and Learning is at the core of all University Centre activities which establishes a sound platform for transformations to occur.

As a phrase the meaning of 'Teaching and Learning' is broad and extensive, incorporating all forms of engagement between academic staff and learners. Given the breadth of curriculum this further means that there is a diverse range of teaching and learning methods and activities across subject area, specialism and level. This strategy encapsulates the ethos of the core Yeovil College and University Centre Yeovil mission, aims and values, building on the University Centre's reputation and recognition for excellence in this field.

The central themes within this strategy articulates the College's committal to the quality of learning opportunities, programmes and student experience, as well as the core purpose relating to the vocational direction of the curriculum structures, manifested through scholarship. This aligns with the College's values which relate to supporting a wide range of students in their development as autonomous learners, capable of both independent and interdependent learning. Programmes within the College will have a strong connection between applied vocational and academically enriching knowledge, understanding and professional skills which broadens the acumen of all learners.

This strategy is an active document which will be discussed and referred to by Faculty Directors, Curriculum Directors, and Curriculum Quality Managers in the planning to deliver new and future programmes. The strategy will furthermore be consulted as part of Annual Programme Monitoring, Course / Faculty Monitoring, and University Centre Self-Evaluation.

2. Aims of Higher Education at the University Centre Yeovil:

2.1. The key aims and objectives of the University Centre Yeovil's Higher Education Strategy have been developed as an integral part of the overall Yeovil College strategic plan. The HE Strategy is written to ensure it follows the overall strategic direction of the College and embodies the College's values and corporate objectives.

- Create a vibrant and flexible curriculum which reflects the changing needs of our economic context and recognises the demands of new vocational needs, and non-traditional learners
- Promote and develop our unique higher education experience through the quality of our teaching and learning strategies and our student support.
- Widen participation, improve student learning opportunity, and increase progression to employment in a manner which adds-value to both learner and the economy.
- Staff will be highly qualified and committed to developing their pedagogic and subject specific skills and knowledge

- Partnerships will be developed and maintained to strengthen the higher education offer in Somerset and enable a richer and more appropriate choice for students
- The University Centre Quality Assurance and Academic Regulatory Frameworks will be 'fit for purpose' and developed to enhance self evaluation and self improvement.
- There will be collaboration and co-ownership of the University Centre's strategic direction and curriculum with both the learner body and sector industries
- An understanding that 'success' starts with the learner

2.2. The University Centre's strategy focuses on achieving excellence for all students with the curriculum being aimed very specifically at vocational areas in line with the national skills agenda. Similarly it is intrinsic in correlating the vocational skills agenda with the quality expectations as determined by National Higher Education policy and benchmarks in changing times. Key curricula themes of enterprise and education for sustainable development are embedded in the curricula and assessments.

3. Core Themes

The University Centre Yeovil will provide a teaching and learning structure for all participants which is directed by the 10 values of:

- A focus on the **Learner Experience** – throughout all aspects of their journey
- **Scholarship** – in the generation and supporting of an **Academic Community**
- Provision of effective **Learning Support**
- **Connectivity** with relevant industries / professions
- Academic and Vocational **Quality**
- Embedding **Innovation and Research**
- Continuous Professional Development (**CPD**) and Personal Development Planning (**PDP**)
- **Flexibility** throughout all aspects of the provision
- Inspirational and Innovative **Teaching and Learning**
- Maintaining a **Supportive Environment** for all participants

3.1. **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) will be intrinsic throughout all aspects of the University Centre curriculum, both intrinsically and extrinsically.

3.2. Teaching and Learning will be informed by **Scholarship**. This considers the University Centre's emphasis on excellence through teaching at all levels of the curriculum, but with a clear focus on the learner journey. The University Centre is renowned for its external activities which engage across the spectrums of industrial collaboration, scholarly activity, research, knowledge transfer and knowledge exchange. Further to this is the value Yeovil College has in ensuring that all members of academic staff undertake regular updating of both subject specialist

knowledge / skills and those attributed to advances in teaching, learning and assessment practice. It is the use of this gamut of scholarly undertakings that not only ensures the currency of our subjects and teaching practice, but furthermore that the means by which knowledge and skills are delivered and acquired are enriching to all participants – producing an environment where a thriving **Academic Community** exists.

- 3.3. The continued development and strengthening of **learning support** services and the learning infrastructure, for learners at all levels. This theme considers the spectrum of support services and needs which impacts on teaching and learning, as well as the accessibility of learning itself. The University Centre is dedicated in ensuring that all learners have adequate mechanisms that ensure an inclusive learning directive – be this directed by tutorial or other external measures. This takes into consideration modes of learning delivery, specific learning support, and the ability for learners to undertake a range of learning and assessment opportunities. The diverse needs of learners in order to achieve their ambitions through education are a primary driver through advice and guidance to ensure success and progression. Personal Development Planning (**PDP**) will be an integral feature, which are facilitated by tutors but owned by learners. Through PDP students will direct their studies – understanding the interconnections between their learning, experience and employability.
- 3.4. As a institution dedicated to vocational education across the curriculum, teaching and learning will be flexibly responsive to advances and innovations driven and informed by industry. Furthermore all programmes will have clear **connections** with relevant industries and employers that inform the curriculum either directly or through scholarship. Curriculum will be designed so that it can rapidly alter to ensure learners are provided the most up to date knowledge to foster high level skills and employability.
- 3.5. All programmes will demonstrate significant **quality** via a multi-modal approach. This will be through peer-based teaching observations, mid-year course evaluations, end-of year evaluations, student Board of Studies, Programme Team Meetings, HE Programme Reviews, and evaluations by External Examiners / Verifiers. All programmes must ensure that course documentation as well as teaching materials; assessment practice; and subsequent evaluations of teaching and learning exceed the minimum requirements outlined and evaluated by the Quality Assurance Agency and UK Quality code, internal Quality Standards (as defined by process and procedure) as well as external quality standards defined by University Partners. **Quality** will remain a fluid entity which must remain 'live' – so as to establish a culture of pro-action to address issues in-year, rather than reaction, and adjustment upon conclusion.
- 3.6. All programmes will feature diverse and unique modes of delivery that demonstrates innovation in the **teaching and learning** process. This will feature the application of ICT, e- and blended learning appropriate to the learning styles of those undertaking the programme; inspiration modes of delivery and co-ownership of curriculum. The level of application will vary according to the need of the subject, however all programmes are expected to facilitate innovative teaching practices which support a flexible and enriching learning experience.
- 3.7. **Learner Experience** is paramount to the success of the learner journey across all possible metric measures. The University Centre is dedicated to ensuring that all learners are provided with the opportunity to collegiately engage with a range of

additional activities that enhance their studies. All learners will be actively involved in the evaluation of teaching and learning through a range of formats to ensure that quality improvements are maintained and that the student voice is integral to future curriculum developments and strategic direction of the University Centre itself.

- 3.8. All programmes will undertake regular evaluations of currency in practice to ensure that all relevant content, delivery methods and subject materials are fit for purpose. The process of **continuous professional development** will assure the continued quality of the curriculum as well as mechanisms by which this is facilitated.
- 3.9. That the curriculum will be designed to facilitate a gamut of **flexible** opportunities for learners to vocationally progress. In this the University Centre's curriculum will allow for studies to be undertaken during the week, evenings, weekends; via e-, distance or blended learning; to complete professional CPD or short study programmes; or to undertake components / modules which can be banked towards awards.
- 3.10. To provide a **supportive environment** in which teaching is recognised, valued and rewarded for all those who teach and support learning throughout the University Centre. This will include the monitoring and updating of resources for teaching and learning as the needs for programmes and students expands. Staff development and updating are key components, where opportunities will be provided and supported by the College. This will include activities that meet, for example, the CPD requirements for membership of the Higher Education Academy, as well as other relevant, subject related updating which benefits the development of the curriculum.
- 3.11. The teaching and learning throughout the University Centre will provide opportunities for enhancing vocational curriculum and skills through methods of flexible co-delivery and **collaboration** across subject areas.
- 3.12. **Effective teaching and learning** which enables students to engage in curious, critical and creative dialogues; within processes that encourage them to read, write and debate with peers and tutors; provide a means to explore, reflect and engage in public settings.

4. Performance Indicators

In measuring the successful implementation of its Teaching and Learning strategy the University Centre will, in part, use the following indicators along with other central College systems.

Performance Indicator	Definition / Measurement	Target
Results of external assessments / evaluations	Latest assessments by QA Agencies, Partner Universities, & External Examiners / Verifiers	Satisfactory outcomes
Student Retention	Course, Divisional and College retention to exceed College and National benchmarks	Above Benchmark
Student Progression	Increased internal progression or progression to next	Above Benchmark

	academic level, in line with National Benchmark against numbers projects to complete	
Student Achievement	Numbers of student success against their intended award of study at entry; evaluation of the number of high-level awards; Comparative analysis against national statistics	Above Benchmark
Student Satisfaction	National Student Survey results, by scale and overall satisfaction; internal perception surveys and audit; complaints process	Sustained improvement in NSS outcomes & internal satisfaction level upon entry, mid-year and exit; measured reduction in student complaints
Employability and student destinations	Internal and External student destination surveys post study. To reflect and exceed College set benchmarks	Above Benchmark
Staff Satisfaction / Engagement	Staff Appraisal / PDR process; Staff Surveys; Staff CPD records	Completion and compliance with College policy and expectations; increased staff satisfaction

5. Teaching and Learning Philosophy

To draw on the scholarship, expertise and professionalism of all colleagues; work closely with industry; inspiring learners to engage fully in the teaching and learning process, enabling the development of autonomous, reflective and effective learners with high aspirations; and providing innovative quality learning experiences that develop our learners to be highly employable, capable of advanced study, and confident in their ability to contribute to the economy and society, locally, nationally and internationally.