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University of Plymouth

Strategies in this series include:

- Human Resources
- Internationalisation
- Research and Innovation

Teaching and Learning Strategy 2009 – 2012

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External Recognition

The Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs)

In January 2005 the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) awarded four CETLs to the University of Plymouth, the maximum award possible for any university, with also a share in a collaborative CETL based at Liverpool Hope University. The following CETLs have been awarded:

Education for Sustainable Development

The Centre for Sustainable Futures aims to put sustainability at the centre of the university's thinking and practice.

Centre for Excellence in Professional Placement Learning

The Ceppl aims to enhance placement and practice learning to the benefit of students, educators and service users.

University of Plymouth Teaching and Learning Strategy 2009 – 2012



Transforming lives through knowledge

- The University of Plymouth has a national reputation for excellence in teaching and learning; we aim to build on this excellence, transforming our students' lives through knowledge
- We aspire to be *the* enterprise university. In partnership with business and the public and voluntary sectors, we will play a distinctive role in the development, application and exchange of knowledge in the city, the region and beyond. We will apply 'the enterprise values' of initiative, imagination and resourcefulness to teaching and learning
- We value the application of knowledge in a diverse global community and we understand the importance of the sustainability agenda in maintaining the global environment. We will encourage students (on programmes at all levels) and staff in developing the cross-cultural ethos and sustainability skills needed by global citizens in the 21st century

The Plymouth Graduate

The student experience at Plymouth draws inspiration from the spirit of discovery that marks our region's maritime and industrial heritage, and from its unique natural environment. We believe Plymouth graduates will develop their potential, making a major contribution to business and society.

We are committed to developing graduates who:

- are ambitious and autonomous learners who possess sound academic knowledge
- are critical, rational and innovative thinkers, who are confident, adaptable and capable of independent enquiry
- have a wide range of intellectual and key skills, and a reflective approach to learning
- are readily employable, and well-equipped, through direct work experience or volunteering, for lifelong learning and the professional world
- are ready to take their place as active, co-operative and responsible citizens in local and global society

The Plymouth learning community

At Plymouth, we see teaching and learning as a partnership between staff and students, based upon co-learning, active participation and mutual respect.

We encourage all students to:

- develop an enthusiasm for learning and for their subject
- actively engage in the learning community
- show initiative and be resourceful, imaginative and inventive, looking for and taking opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills
- be outward looking and work with staff and external agencies to gain experience of the professional world

External Recognition

The Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs)

Higher Education Learning Partnerships

The HELP CETL is working to establish recognition and reward approaches for Higher Education in Further Education staff to further their personal and professional development and establish coherent and functioning Communities of Practice that operate across multiple institutions.

Experiential Learning in the Environmental and Natural Sciences

The CETL in Experiential Learning arises from a strong tradition at Plymouth of 'hands-on' learning in the environmental and natural sciences, typified by fieldwork, laboratory work and work-based learning.

External Recognition

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LearnHigher (a CETL partnership of sixteen universities)

The LearnHigher project team in Plymouth is working with staff across disciplines to evaluate and embed learning materials which promote critical thinking and reflection.

We value and will seek to reward staff who are experts in their field, are committed to providing an excellent student experience, and who are alive to the professional and workplace challenges experienced by the modern graduate.

We encourage staff to:

- support students in all aspects of university life, encouraging their academic and personal development so that each student enjoys a strong sense of recognition and appreciation as an individual
- model the enthusiasm for subject, learning and discovery that we encourage in our students
- demonstrate commitment to the sustainability agenda, an enterprise based approach and graduate employability in their curricula and teaching
- demonstrate an open, friendly and caring approach to students and colleagues and to foster an inclusive community and culture, which encourages a high level of student and staff engagement and interaction
- develop and enhance their expertise in teaching and learning by engaging in the Higher Education Authority-accredited Teaching and Learning programmes offered at the university, and by continuing to build their expertise through ongoing CPD for advanced practitioners
- develop and use their research expertise for the benefit of student learning. Plymouth is one of the top 50 UK universities for research, as endorsed by the results of the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)

The university, as a corporate entity, will provide the frameworks and guidance to support staff and students in meeting these aspirations and enjoying a high quality teaching and learning experience.

The university will promote:

- a strong pastoral support structure in a friendly, caring learning community
- an educational experience that responds to learners at all levels as individuals, enabling each to reach their full potential
- opportunities for staff and students to acquire subject knowledge and appropriate professional skills
- opportunities for staff and students to develop employment and life skills
- a community sensitive to environmental and social needs and committed to the principles of equality and diversity
- opportunities for students, including those with disabilities, to enjoy the benefits of work-based learning and/or volunteering

Building on Excellence

The Royal Statistical Society

has selected the University of Plymouth as the new location for its Centre for Statistical Education (CSE). The centre will build on our already strong reputation for teaching, learning and research in mathematics and statistics and enable us to further develop a world-class facility here in Plymouth.

An innovative focus on Marine studies and issues

The University of Plymouth operates on a truly international stage in relation to marine and maritime innovations and developments. Plymouth has a unique maritime history of discovery. True to this tradition, the University of Plymouth offers world-class teaching and research in a wide spectrum of marine subjects brought together under the banner of the Marine Institute.



Building on Excellence

The Plymouth Higher Group

The Plymouth Higher Group initiative involves all four institutions delivering higher education in the city and is led by the University of Plymouth. This project offers a seamless portal for access to skills development and training and is currently bidding to establish a Creative Economy Learning Platform.

FLUX

FLUX is the UK's largest student enterprise and entrepreneurship competition. Undergraduate teams from the University of Plymouth have twice won the national finals, coming first against over 100 universities and 8,000 entrants.

Key themes

We wish to build on our external recognition for excellence in teaching and learning, by developing, sharing and embedding innovations which will enhance the student experience. To achieve this we will focus on the following key themes.

Key theme 1 – To place the enterprise ethos at the heart of teaching and learning

'Enterprising' describes the type of organisation we aspire to be, the type of people we want to attract and the activities we wish to conduct; we believe enterprise should be at the very core of all university activity. 'Enterprising' teaching delivers a vibrant learning experience to all our students.

- We will continue to develop teaching that demonstrates initiative and is inspirational and innovative
- We will enable students to develop enterprising attributes such as creativity and resourcefulness
- We will encourage staff who show initiative and imagination and who have an enterprising and entrepreneurial approach
- We will be responsive and opportunist, reflecting the changing needs of individuals, professional bodies and the workforce

Key theme 2 – To continue to develop a learner-centred approach that is responsive to the needs of students as individuals

We are committed to an inclusive, learner-centred approach that encourages active student engagement and provides flexibility in how, when and where students carry out their learning.

- We will use the new technologies to give students more control of where and when they study, thereby facilitating greater individualisation in how students manage their learning.
- We will provide appropriate formative and summative assessment with feedback designed to support a learner-centred approach and to motivate and encourage students
- We will focus on the importance of the learning environment, promoting opportunities for active and reflective learning such as studio, field and laboratory work and personal development planning

- We will ensure, where appropriate, flexible delivery modes, employing remotely-accessed support materials, available through our regional, national and international partnerships
- We will take forward our commitment to equality and diversity in both curriculum design and delivery

Key theme 3 – To consolidate existing work-related, work-based and placement learning and extend its provision to better support students, employers and those in employment

We recognise the value of work-based, work-related and placement learning for students and those in employment. As we develop as the enterprise-led university, work-based learning will become more prominent, fulfilling professional imperatives and addressing business needs, as well as offering opportunities to enhance students' future employability.

- We will continue to embed professional, employability and career management skills into university programmes and curricula, contributing to the development of graduate skills and attributes
- We will ensure each student has the opportunity to participate in accredited or supported work-based learning and/or volunteering
- We will encourage students to develop skills through learning outside the formal curriculum

Key theme 4 – To continue to develop our research-informed teaching approach

Research-informed teaching is a key indicator of excellence in teaching and learning at Plymouth. Students benefit from a rich, research-informed curriculum and from working within a teaching and learning community that embodies the spirit of enquiry and values scholarship.

- We will ensure the inclusion and discussion of discipline-based research within the curriculum in order that students understand how knowledge is created and advanced
- We will ensure that there are opportunities in the curriculum for students to learn about, acquire and practise research skills
- We will further develop our excellent record in research that supports the knowledge economy, through knowledge exchange and employer engagement

External Recognition

Host institution for the Higher Education Academy's national Subject Centre for Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES)

This centre promotes and supports high quality learning and teaching across the disciplines of geography, earth and environmental sciences throughout UK higher education.

National Teaching Fellowships (NTFs)

The university has been awarded no less than eleven Fellowships making Plymouth one of the UK's most successful institutions in the NTF competition. The National Teaching Fellowship Scheme aims to raise the profile of learning and teaching, recognise and celebrate individuals who make an outstanding impact on the student learning experience and provide a national focus for institutional teaching and learning excellence schemes.

Building on Excellence

Work-Based Learning

In 2007/8 12,200 students were engaged in some form of work-based and placement learning. The university has a history of providing a wide range of quality work based and placement learning, through professional courses, traditional sandwich courses, undergraduate work based learning modules in vocational and non-vocational programmes, and through a range of provision for those in employment.

- We will promote educational and pedagogic research in order to ensure best practice in our teaching and learning activities

Key theme 5 – To develop an internationalised approach to learning and teaching

Modern graduates must be able to act effectively in a global culture, economy and environment. We aim to equip our graduates for this experience, by promoting cross-cultural and multicultural understanding, and by providing a relevant educational experience in an environment that is supportive and inclusive for all students.

- We will continue to develop the international agenda, embedding it in the core of the curriculum
- We will encourage international collaboration through, for example, joint academic developments with global partners and by growing our international alumni network
- We will increase opportunities for safe, high quality international work-based and volunteering learning opportunities
- We will develop student skills to compete in the global business environment, promoting global citizenship and developing multicultural awareness

Key theme 6 – To continue to develop education for sustainability

We have a long-standing commitment to sustainability and intend to achieve institution-wide excellence in contributing to a sustainable future. We recognise that there are inter-related cultural, economic, social and technological, as well as environmental, dimensions to the sustainability agenda, which itself is continuously evolving.

- We will champion the importance of developing graduates who possess the skills needed to engage with the sustainability agenda as professionals, citizens and in their personal lives
- We will encourage all disciplines to embed sustainability within their curricula and utilise the learning and research opportunities provided by campus and community sustainability initiatives

Key theme 7 – To continue to develop opportunities for employers and employees to use the university for Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

CPD improves and broadens an individual's knowledge and skills, developing the qualities required in their professional lives. At Plymouth we believe learning takes place throughout a lifetime. We aim to respond to the increasing variety in expectations for professional updating, by providing opportunities for full and part-time study, in parallel with employment or during a career break.

- We will enhance our CPD policy, promote high quality provision and increase our market share in this field
- We will provide CPD opportunities which incorporate work-based learning and recognise work-based achievements
- We will seek to model good practice as an employer in supporting the development and CPD of our own staff, including that of students employed by, or on placement with, the university

Key theme 8 – To maintain and develop our commitment to widening participation in higher education from under-represented groups. The university has a successful reputation for widening participation. The University of Plymouth Partner College Network is a key part of this, offering local, high quality higher education to our students.

Our commitment to widening participation is delivered using many valuable partnerships. We will ensure that all students at the university, including our Partner Colleges, have the chance to experience transformative learning and participate fully in the life of the university and its surrounding community whatever their background.

- We will work with regional partners and University Partner Colleges (UPC), to facilitate the deployment of accessible widening participation opportunities in formats and at locations that are appropriate to learner needs
- We will continue to research, evaluate and deploy subject differentiated approaches to widening participation, in partnership with subject experts and other stakeholders
- We will continue to research, evaluate and extend widening participation opportunities in partnership with employers and supported by appropriate technological tools and pedagogic design

Building on Excellence

Teaching Fellowship Award Scheme

The university's Teaching Fellowship Award Scheme is a yearly initiative. It provides funds which allow staff to undertake innovative developments or research projects in the area of teaching and learning. With about ten awards per year it provides an important means of promoting innovation and encouraging pedagogic research across the institution.

The Centre for Leadership and Organisational Excellence (CLOE)

The university's 'spin-in' company, CLOE, was established to fuse strong private-sector management consultancy expertise with academic quality standards and accreditation. It delivers leadership and company performance solutions in masters-accredited, bite-size chunks to a growing client base including organisations as diverse as CISCO and the police.

Building on Excellence

Britannia Royal Naval College

Recently, the university joined forces with the Britannia Royal Naval College in a 10-year collaboration for the delivery and accreditation of academic aspects of the college's officer training programmes.

Key theme 9 – To harness and exploit new technologies to enhance the teaching and learning experience.

Recent technological developments have enormous potential to enhance teaching and learning. The University of Plymouth is committed to extending appropriate provision in technology-enhanced learning (TEL), with particular emphasis on facilitating a learner-centred approach. TEL is an approach that combines with other methods to achieve a blended learning experience responsive to the needs of the individual student.

- We will embed remote access to support materials in all programmes, as flexible access to such materials is central to a versatile, responsive and personalised education experience
- We will extend training and advice in TEL, supporting our staff in adapting to more flexible teaching approaches
- We will promote a TEL infrastructure that supports the specific needs of programmes and modules that are delivered flexibly, in order, for example, to engage the wider community of practice-based teachers, mentors and other professionals supporting the student experience

Key theme 10 – To strengthen connections between the university, the city and the region, to our mutual benefit.

Alongside our international agenda, the university has a key role to play in the city and the region, by raising aspirations, building intellectual capital and providing opportunities for workforce development and lifelong learning.

- We will continue the spirit of discovery associated with Plymouth and the region through an enterprising approach to teaching and learning activities, marked by innovation and intellectual curiosity
- We will continue to make best use of, and seek to extend, opportunities for knowledge transfer, placement/work-based learning and professional updating (CPD) with business and with the public and voluntary sectors
- We will, where appropriate, promote opportunities for our students to learn from engagement with local communities, issues and projects

- We will work for the common good of the region's communities by promoting volunteering among staff and students, raising aspirations among young people and providing opportunities for lifelong learning

Building on Excellence

People and Planet

The university has an outstanding record in sustainable development. In addition to the success of our Centre for Excellence in Education for Sustainable Development, the university has twice come second (out of more than 100 higher education institutions) in the national People and Planet competition.

