

UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER

# LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY

2020-2025

INSPIRED FOR LIFE



Educational excellence and high-quality learning opportunities are fundamental to the University's overall mission. We believe that higher education should have a transformative impact on individuals and on society as a whole, and our Strategy is at the heart of this belief.

#### THE LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY 2020-2025 HAS THREE MAIN PURPOSES:

- To articulate our vision and key development priorities for learning and teaching over the next five years
- To provide guidance on how we will achieve our vision and development priorities
- To define the attributes our graduates will acquire through studying at the University.

The Strategy reflects our core values of intellectual openness, democracy and love of learning together with the promotion of educational and social inclusion, sustainability and social responsibility. It is aligned with our Strategic Plan, 2019, and aims to build on our established strengths in providing an inclusive and high-quality higher education.

We strive to create a learning community which encourages students to love their subject, and become good citizens, both within the University and in the wider world. For this reason, we have articulated the attributes that we aim to develop in all our graduates.

Our curricula are designed with the development of these attributes in mind, so that we can support every student to fulfil their own academic and personal potential and enable them to use the skills that they develop to contribute to transforming society for the better.

A key feature of a University of Worcester education is the interweaving of expert knowledge and practical applied learning based on a golden triangle of well-motivated students, inspirational educators and expert professional mentors. The University's reputation for excellence and quality in education, our capacity for continuous enhancement and innovation, means we are committed to inspiring our students for life, through creating possibilities, developing potential and building partnerships.



*The University has been ranked in the top 3 in the UK for Quality Education in both 2019 and 2020 in the Times Higher Education's University Impact Rankings.*

## Vision

WE WILL BE RECOGNISED FOR EXCELLENT INSPIRING AND INCLUSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING.

WE WILL BUILD PARTNERSHIPS TO CREATE NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING.

WE WILL SEEK TO REALISE THE POTENTIAL OF ALL OUR STAFF, STUDENTS AND GRADUATES, TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

## Our Principles

THE DELIVERY OF OUR STRATEGY WILL BE UNDERPINNED BY FIVE KEY PRINCIPLES:

1. We will work in partnership with our students
2. We will design and develop courses that inspire, challenge, and foster a lifelong love of learning
3. Our teaching will promote personal and professional resilience alongside student's development as members of disciplinary communities
4. We believe equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is integral to excellence in learning and teaching and thus will embed and promote EDI in all that we do
5. We will build a dynamic and supportive learning environment for staff and for students that is research inspired and digitally enabled.

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## Our Areas of Focus and Impact

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We have identified five broad areas of focus for enhancing our learning and teaching over the next period, where we aim to make the greatest impact.

These articulate what is distinctive about learning and teaching at Worcester, building on our achievements to date, and providing a framework for all Schools and professional support departments to set development priorities.

Schools and courses will engage in different ways and to different degrees with each of these areas of focus, reflecting disciplinary and pedagogic perspectives, and taking account of current performance regarding student outcomes, and curriculum expertise.

### Access and Inclusion

We will continue to be an institution that is committed to widening access and participation in higher education.

We will ensure the accessibility of our learning environments and provide continuing professional development for staff to implement best practice in inclusive learning and teaching, making effective use of technology where appropriate.

Our courses, curricula and approaches to learning and teaching will be attractive and relevant, and we will address attainment gaps identified in our Access and Participation Plan. The impact of this will be seen in our growing reputation for excellence in inclusive practice and the narrowing of our access and attainment gaps.

### Realising Potential

Enabling our students to 'find their voice' through engagement with the broad range of learning opportunities in subject disciplines, professional training and skills-based learning both within and beyond the formal curriculum, is central to what we do.

We aim to develop confident and resilient graduates by providing effectively balanced intellectual challenge and learning support. Confident and resilient graduates will be self-assured in their own abilities and qualities, and be able to reflect upon setbacks, adapt, re-motivate and 'bounce back' to continue to work towards their aspirations.

We will develop our capacity to use analytical data to help support students in engaging and progressing. We are also committed to a recognition and reward structure for staff that celebrates teaching excellence, innovation and inspirational practice. We will see the impact of this in high levels of student engagement and satisfaction, and improved outcome metrics.

### Active Flexible Learning

We recognise that technology is transforming learning and teaching and that the future will demand new skills, capabilities and ways of working. We remain committed, particularly for our undergraduate programmes, to a campus-based learning experience that prioritises active learning. At the same time, our students require greater flexibility in when and how they learn away from the campus, and in the use of technologies for blended learning.

Having adopted the Jisc digital capabilities framework, we will develop significantly the digital capabilities of staff and students and invest carefully in learning technology developments that enable greater accessibility and flexibility. This means our students will be highly engaged learners developing the skills to succeed in a global digital world.

### Applied and Research Inspired Education

Many of our students are studying on professional and work related programmes where we work in partnership with employers to ensure effective practical application of skills.

We are also committed to embedding research inspired teaching which enables students to understand and engage in research processes related to their discipline, and have opportunities to engage with professional enquiry and innovation in partnership with staff.

Our aim is to build on our already strong reputation for excellence by linking research, knowledge exchange and learning and teaching for applied learning through engagement with external communities and employers. This will result in more 'real-world' learning for our students, who will graduate as confident and 'career-ready'.

### Education for Sustainable Futures

The University has a national reputation in relation to education for sustainable development and we are committed to strengthening and extending this, as reflected in our endorsement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Accord.

We will do this by embedding our graduate attributes in the curriculum, with all courses implementing these through their discipline lens, and ensuring curricula reflect and align with our values for inclusion, internationalisation, ethical and socially responsible global citizenship.

We aim to ensure our graduates help transform communities and society for the better. The impact of this will be seen in the currency of our curricula and the confidence of our graduates to make a difference.



## Our Graduate Attributes

We intend that our Learning and Teaching Strategy will promote focused development of graduate attributes that reflect our values and our mission, enabling our graduates to have a positive impact on their own lives and those of others.

The graduate attributes will be an essential framework for curriculum and pedagogical development at course, School and University levels. These will be embedded and made explicit in partnership with students through design of both the formal and co-curriculum learning opportunities.

### **Social responsibility**

Graduates who are globally and socially responsible, culturally aware and understand the ethical impact of decisions.

### **Reflective and resilient lifelong learning**

Graduates who are resilient and aspirational, intellectually curious and critically reflective lifelong learners.

### **Digital citizenship**

Graduates who have high degrees of digital capability to actively and responsibly create, communicate and collaborate online.

### **Problem solving**

Graduates who can employ analytical, creative and evaluative skills to investigate problems and propose viable solutions.

### **Teamwork and effective communication**

Graduates who can work in teams and communicate effectively to a range of audiences.



**THE GRADUATE  
ATTRIBUTES WILL BE AN  
ESSENTIAL FRAMEWORK  
FOR CURRICULUM  
DEVELOPMENT AT  
COURSE, SCHOOL AND  
UNIVERSITY LEVELS**

*Worcester has been shortlisted three times as the Times Higher Education's University of the Year – in 2016, 2019 and 2020.*

Delivering  
our vision

To deliver on our vision we will focus on five key components of our learning and teaching environment:

People

- 1. We will continue to recruit students from diverse educational and social backgrounds and seek to ensure every student realises their academic potential, personal goals and aspirations.
- 2. We will further strengthen our staff professional development, career pathways, recognition and rewards structures to foster excellence, innovation and leadership in teaching.
- 3. We will ensure our academic and learning support staff have the skills and capabilities for inspiring professional practice, with an emphasis on developing inclusive and digital practice for blended approaches to student learning.

Infrastructure

- 1. We will develop modern and sustainable learning environments for our teaching, making best use of technologies for active flexible and accessible learning.
- 2. We will invest in and develop learning and teaching support structures and services at the University which enable the implementation of the vision set out in this strategy.
- 3. We will invest appropriately in the development of our digital estate and management information systems to underpin the effective management and realisation of our vision for teaching and learning.

Culture

- 1. We will promote and celebrate learning communities that reflect our core values and encourage students and staff to contribute to social transformation and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- 2. We will create more opportunities for students to collaborate with staff in professional scholarship and enquiry, through greater synergy between our centres of research excellence, research groups and the curriculum.
- 3. Every School will develop strategies for increasing its external profile for excellence in learning and teaching, including through publications, presentations and national recognition of excellence in teaching and learning.

Collaboration

- 1. We will further extend our strategies for working in partnership with students and employers, to shape and co-create the curriculum and learning experiences.
- 2. We will work with our students and collaborate with other HE providers, including our partners, to address the targets set out in our Access and Participation Plan in relation to student outcomes.
- 3. Every academic department will build opportunities for students to apply their learning through collaboration with employers and/or community organisations, in local, regional, national, international and digital contexts as appropriate.

Engagement

- 1. Every course will develop a strategy from application to post-graduation to support transitions and skills development, engendering a strong sense of belonging to the University.
- 2. Every student will have the opportunity to engage with and reflect on their own learning journey, through the ethical use of learner data, supported by their personal academic tutor.
- 3. All courses will provide students with opportunities to develop the University's graduate attributes through research inspired and real-world learning opportunities.





## Implementing our Strategy

**Our strategy will be underpinned by an operational plan at University level which will set out development priorities related to the areas of focus and impact.**

This plan will structure and shape the development of operational plans for each of our nine academic Schools and, where appropriate, professional support departments. Progress against the University-level operational plan will be over seen by the University's Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. School-level plans will be overseen by the relevant College Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement Committees. Plans will be monitored, reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

All courses will continue to have their own enhancement plans which will be discussed and monitored through Course Management Committees and scrutinised through the annual evaluation process.

### MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF OUR STRATEGY

Whilst the success of our Strategy will be measured at one level by the progress of its implementation, we have also identified a small number of key metrics which we believe provide a measure of its overall success:

- Performance in TEF
- Progress against our Access and Participation Plan targets
- Student engagement and satisfaction measures, including career readiness and graduate employment metrics
- External recognition of our learning and teaching excellence, for example via league tables and institutional, departmental and individual awards for teaching quality
- External dissemination of teaching related outputs.

