

STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE 2 (2015-2020)

1. Context

- 1.1 The *Strategy for Enhancing the Student Experience* supports the University's strategic goal, '**We will be a university that enables a student experience of the highest standard possible**'.
- 1.2 During the academic year 2009/10 the University consulted widely on its new institutional Strategy to take it forward to 2020. In February 2010 this was agreed and is known as *Brookes Strategy 2020*. In September 2010 the *Strategy for Enhancing Student Experience* (SESE 2010-2015) was agreed. The 'Programme to Enhance the Student Experience' (PESE) co-ordinated the delivery of 12 projects which underpinned the SESE.
- 1.3 The *Brookes Strategy* was revised and updated in 2014 to cover the period from 2015 - 2020. The document presented here is a refreshed version of the SESE, which supports the revised *Brookes Strategy 2020* and calls to action the design of the subsequent Programme of projects to Enhance the Student Experience to be known as PESE2 (2015-2020).

2. Strategic Goals

- 2.1 The *Brookes Strategy 2020* articulates two strategic goals relating to the student experience. They are:
- 2.2 **We will ensure that learning and teaching are at the leading edge and relevant to contemporary contexts.**
- 2.3 **We will provide an environment where students are proactively engaged in shaping their experience through influencing learning and extra-curricular policy, processes and outcomes.**

3. Principles underlying the SESE

- 3.1 Oxford Brookes is a student-centred University, committed to the creation of inclusive and participative learning communities, a strong relationship between teaching and research, and the importance of continuing professional development for all staff involved in supporting student learning. This document is designed to include all students, full time, part time, undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research, distance learning, and students attending Brookes' programmes at collaborative partners. Many of these groups will need particular, differentiated and focused, attention and resources.

3.2 The University will enhance the student learning experience based on the following principles.

- 3.2.1 All staff involved with learning seek to inspire students and to foster their intellectual development and wider well-being.
- 3.2.2 Students will be encouraged to learn in ways that make a creative contribution to personal growth; that extend their life chances, allow them to exploit opportunities and make a constructive contribution to society.
- 3.2.3 Students have the opportunity to practise habits of learning that will be useful throughout their lives and will help them to be responsive in a rapidly changing world. This includes being able to use technology to shape their own learning environment and interactions.
- 3.2.4 Students are encouraged to see learning as both a collaborative and individual activity in both formal and informal settings. The student experience will be enhanced by the promotion of a diversity of educational opportunity and encouragement of widening participation in higher education.
- 3.2.5 Student support arrangements place an emphasis on proactive interventions to address obstacles to learning encountered by individual students and to promote effective approaches to learning and personal development.

3.3 *The importance of staff and students in partnership*

- 3.3.1 We will seek to have a continuing partnership with our students, consulting with them and with alumni.
- 3.3.2 Student representation, engagement and partnership all have a role in improving educational outcomes and institutional change.
- 3.3.3 Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning, to engage actively with feedback and assessment, and to develop their own justifiable ways of thinking about and constructing their view of the world.
- 3.3.4 All staff who support learning seek meaningful feedback from students about their experience of learning, and use this to improve the quality of learning opportunities offered by the University.

3.4 *The importance of inclusive practices*

- 3.4.1 Learning, teaching and assessment at Oxford Brookes enables all students to reach their potential and does not disadvantage any groups of students.

- 3.4.2 The University will provide digital and physical learning environments and resources, both formal and informal, that are accessible to all and afford opportunities for a variety of learning approaches.
- 3.4.3 We recognise that all students are international in the sense that they will go on to live and work in a globalised society. Particular importance will therefore be given to international perspectives in both curriculum and pedagogy.

3.5 *The importance of a curriculum which is transformational*

- 3.5.1 The curriculum is designed to reflect the connectedness of knowledge, such that academic study can be integrated with relevant practice and the wider social experience of students.
- 3.5.2 The curriculum enables students to develop their own intellectual positions in a critical fashion, while appreciating the strengths of other constructions and arguments.
- 3.5.3 The curriculum provides students with an awareness of ecological and sustainability issues, and encourages them to be responsible, active, global citizens.
- 3.5.4 A research-informed curriculum enables students to benefit from collaboration in a research community as producers of knowledge through research-based learning.
- 3.5.5 The curriculum is enriched by using technologies to empower students' development as self-regulating, digitally literate learners, able to shape their own learning interactions and author their own digital artefacts.
- 3.5.6 The curriculum and support services provide students with frameworks to support reflection about their lives before and after graduation and their preparations for making that transition.

3.6 *The importance of collective continuing professional development*

- 3.6.1 Outstanding teachers create opportunities for students to engage with their subjects, and to learn and develop. The University is committed to supporting the development of all its staff and to the enhancement of the staff experience.
- 3.6.2 The University rewards excellence in teaching and learning and provides a clear career progression route for academic staff that recognises their contribution to the student experience. We will seek to provide similar progression routes for all staff who support learning.
- 3.6.3 All staff who support learning participate annually in collective professional development to ensure that their practice is evidence-based, informed by the scholarship of learning

and teaching, and employs up-to-date learning tools and technologies. The University recognises and fosters Programme Team enhancement activity as key to constantly improving learning and teaching.

- 3.6.4 All academic staff who support learning undertake research and/or scholarship into pedagogic practice since these are key to being better teachers, and to the University being a premier learning and teaching institution.

3.7 *The importance of assessment design*

- 3.7.1 Assessment is a fundamental and integral part of course design, and one that is intended to shape as much as to assess learning. Assessment is designed at programme level, and not simply at module level, in order to ensure that assessment shapes learning in a coherent and holistic fashion, consistent with the aims of the programme.
- 3.7.2 A fundamental purpose of assessment is to help students learn by providing formative feedback. Students will be given supportive, constructive and timely feedback as an essential part of learning. Such feedback enables students to build on their positive achievements and have a clear sense of what they need to do to improve.
- 3.7.3 Assessment is designed so that a range of qualities and skills can be fostered, recognised, and validly assessed.
- 3.7.4 We will continue to actively implement and review the contribution of the Brookes Assessment Compact.

3.8 *The importance of integrated digital and physical environments and resources that support learning*

- 3.8.1 The University will provide appropriate contemporary technologies, which enable 24/7 access to key course information, documents and learning activities, and which facilitate learning and support virtual learning communities.
- 3.8.2 The University promotes effective social learning through, among other things, the inclusion of collaborative learning tasks in the curriculum and the provision of high-quality social learning spaces. Staff and students have opportunities to use a range of digital authoring tools and social media to support networking and engagement in a range of communities, formal and informal, in and beyond Brookes.
- 3.8.3 Staff and students are encouraged to make active use of a wide range of digital media and learning tools in order to develop confidence and agility with existing and emerging digital technologies.

- 3.8.4 Digital technology is actively and creatively used to enhance the experience of students through opportunities for formative feedback, to record and share learning and as a medium for networking and engagement.
- 3.8.5 The physical environment is augmented by digital environments and resources in ways which support a distinctive Brookes learning experience as described in this document.

4. Supporting the Principles

4.1 The Principles outlined in section 3 will be supported in 2015-2020 via a programme of projects to be known as PESE2. These will consolidate, further develop and embed projects from PESE1 which are continuing, and foster new initiatives inspired by this refreshed SESE. PESE2 projects will be derived from the priority areas identified in this section:

4.2 A challenging, relevant and internationalised curriculum

- 4.2.1 The University will seek to provide an appropriate, inclusive curriculum which enables Brookes graduates to gain employment, succeed in further study, thrive in valuable and satisfying careers, and contribute to society and the economy. The curriculum will be regularly reviewed and will involve students in the design and review of the curriculum. Employers and alumni will be involved in curriculum design and/or delivery as appropriate.
- 4.2.2 The Brookes Attributes are those abilities, dispositions or qualities that our graduates will need in order to translate and apply their discipline knowledge to new contexts. Employability is enhanced by applying Brookes Attributes within the work context and will be facilitated by opportunities for work based learning, placement learning or mentoring.
- 4.2.3 Every programme will take active steps to develop the five Brookes Attributes, ensuring that the Attributes are explicit and visible in their Programme Learning Outcomes. The Brookes Attributes have been defined at three different programme levels: Foundation Degree, Undergraduate, and Postgraduate. There are subtle but important differences in the specifications of the attributes between the levels.
- 4.2.4 There will be disciplinary differences in how Brookes Attributes are expressed within programme documentation which reflect how programme teams articulate each attribute within the context of their discipline.
- 4.2.5 The Brookes Attributes will be developed through co-curricular and extra-curricular activities as well as through the curriculum. The University will encourage, recognise and reward co-curricular achievement leading to enhanced personal development and increased employability.

The Brookes Attributes

	Foundation	Undergraduate	Postgraduate
Academic literacy	Disciplinary and professional knowledge and skills, understanding how to apply this in the work context, and what it means to think and behave as a member of that disciplinary and/or professional community of practice.	Disciplinary and professional knowledge and skills, understanding the epistemology and 'landscape' of the discipline, and what it means to think and behave as a member of that disciplinary and/or professional community of practice.	Advanced disciplinary and professional knowledge and skills moving beyond the emerging professional to becoming an expert member of the relevant community. This should include the ability to engage in current critical debates within the discipline and the ability to communicate complex ideas to both expert and non-expert audiences, even in the absence of a complete set of data.
Research literacy	Ability to be a critical consumer of research, and also, where possible, to design and undertake a small-scale research project in the discipline, using appropriate methodology. Collects and synthesizes information to inform problem solving in familiar contexts.	Ability to be a critical consumer of research, and also, where possible, to design and undertake at least a small-scale research project in the discipline, using appropriate methodology.	The ability to design and undertake a research project in the discipline, use appropriate methodology and solve complex problems in novel situations. Awareness of current research within the discipline, and the ability to critically evaluate it.
Critical self-awareness and personal literacy	Understanding how one learns, the ability to assess the work of oneself and others, and to identify one's strengths and weaknesses. The ability to take responsibility for personal and professional learning, identifying opportunities for lifelong learning and developing oneself as a versatile, adaptable and confident practitioner. The ability to relate to other people and function collaboratively in diverse groups and situations.	Understanding how one learns, the ability to assess the work of oneself and others, and to identify one's strengths and weaknesses. The ability to organise oneself and perform as an autonomous, effective and independent learner. The ability to relate to other people and function collaboratively in diverse groups, including the development of appropriate interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence and adaptive expertise.	Demonstrate commitment to continuous self-improvement. To include the ability to lead and organise self and others; take personal responsibility in unpredictable and complex situations; make sound and appropriate decisions; to inspire and interact with others in diverse environments.
Digital and information literacy	The functional access, skills and practices necessary to become a confident, agile, adopter of a range of technologies for personal, academic and professional use. To be able to use appropriate technology to search for high-quality information; critically evaluate and engage with the information obtained; reflect on and record learning, and professional and personal development; and engage productively in relevant online communities.	The functional access, skills and practices necessary to become a confident, agile adopter of a range of technologies for personal, academic and professional use. To be able to use appropriate technology to search for high-quality information; critically to evaluate and engage with the information obtained; reflect on and record learning, and professional and personal development; and engage productively in relevant online communities.	The functional access, skills and practices necessary to become a confident, agile adopter of a range of technologies for personal, academic and professional use. To be able to use appropriate technology to search for high-quality information; critically to evaluate and engage with the information obtained; reflect on and record learning, and professional and personal development; and engage productively in relevant online communities.

Active citizenship	Prepared to actively engage with both local and global communities. The ability to understand the local and global context of one's work. Awareness of diverse perspectives, cultures and values and the confidence to question one's own perspective and those of others. Informed about issues of equity, sustainability and social justice.	Prepared to proactively engage with both local and global communities. Knowledge of the local and global perspectives of one's discipline. Critical awareness of the complexity of diverse perspectives, cultures and values and the ability to question one's own perspective and those of others. Ability to use knowledge and skills to improve society through actively engaging with issues of equity, sustainability and social justice.	Prepared to lead both local and global communities. Knowledge of the local and global perspectives of one's discipline. Critical awareness of the complexity of diverse perspectives, cultures and values and the ability to question one's own perspective and those of others. Ability to use knowledge and skills to improve society through actively engage with issues of equity, sustainability and social justice.
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4.3 *Engaging students in University life and communities.*

- 4.3.1 The University is committed to developing further opportunities for students to more effectively engage with its communities, through increased contact with staff and other students and with the Brookes Union.
- 4.3.2 The University will improve transition experiences to enhance students' sense of belonging to our University community, both on entry and after graduation.
- 4.3.3 The University has well-developed processes for listening to the student voice. We will continue to work closely with the student representation team in the Brookes Union to induct and train student representatives for their role. We will seek new and improved ways to reach students on part-time, distance learning and collaborative programmes.
- 4.3.4 The University will seek opportunities for students to provide input and play a role from the outset in the development of new programmes. Building on the successful experiences of the *Brookes' Assessment Compact* and the introduction of *Academic Advisers* and *Student Support Coordinators*, we will work with the Brookes Union to identify opportunities for students to contribute to academic development projects, as members of working groups, organising focus groups or carrying out research, as appropriate.
- 4.3.5 We will continue to work with a range of areas within the University, including the Brookes Union, to design and introduce a number of student-led and extra-curricular initiatives, which will develop and enhance personal and leadership skills and attributes for employability. These initiatives will include volunteering and community work in and around Oxford. We will seek to introduce student mentoring where possible across the University.
- 4.3.6 We will provide the digital environments and technologies that enable students easily to create and support their own groups and networks comprising Brookes students and staff and relevant groups and individuals.

- 4.3.7 The University will seek to increase the involvement of students and staff in the wider social and cultural life of the institution, through support for an enhanced range of social, cultural and sports activities and events.

4.4 *Evidence-based policy development and evaluation*

- 4.4.1 Academic development and student experience, strategic planning and evaluation are aligned to the overall University strategic planning processes. In order that strategic decision-making is founded on robust and readily available data sources, we require an evidence base of rich information.
- 4.4.2 We will continue to enhance the University's data and data analysis systems around students and programmes to guide the University on proactive interventions and on academic development practice and projects.
- 4.4.3 The University will continue to establish opportunities which support the development, and recognise the achievements, of all those who teach and support learning based on evidence of how higher education professionals learn and develop.
- 4.4.4 Making use of our internationally recognised in-house expertise in educational development, we commit to routinely carrying out impact assessment, review and revision of all significant academic development initiatives and of measures taken forward in the SESE. Impact assessments will be sustained and iterative. They will assess the process as well as the end product of developments. In this way, we will continue to collect, analyse, and where appropriate, publish findings from local, primary educational research data, especially where robust relevant data does not exist elsewhere.

4.5 *Infrastructure and services in support of learning*

- 4.5.1 Under the *Brookes Strategy 2020* the fourth Strategic Goal is that infrastructure and services will be "Characterised by its sector leading, high quality, sustainable and cost effective services, operating within a culture of continuous improvement". The University's infrastructure and services will be focused on supporting the quality and effectiveness of learning, teaching and research, and, in general, on enhancing the total experience of students.
- 4.5.2 The University will seek to improve the transactional aspects of the student and staff experience through conducting process reviews, bringing in new infrastructure and processes, making greater use of technology, lean business processes and involving students as partners in the development of our academic processes and services.
- 4.5.3 The University will continue to develop and exploit the potential of digital and physical learning spaces, and will encourage and support staff and students in partnership to find different ways of using these spaces effectively and creatively.