

EDUCATION STRATEGY 2010–15

CONSULTATION DRAFT

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EDUCATION STRATEGY 2010 – 2015

INTRODUCTION

The Education Strategy 2010- 2015 builds on the current Education Strategy 2005-10. It refreshes the University's aims for education and the student experience, and sets out how we intend to deliver them over the planning period 2010 -15.

In updating the Education Strategy, we have taken account of what has been achieved over the past five years to enhance the student experience, what we aim to achieve, as a University, over the next five years, and the new and continuing challenges that we face in doing so. The new version of the Strategy reflects the outcome of a comprehensive review of current policies, performance and risks for education, placed in the wider context of the University's overall strategic response to the challenges it faces. The draft Strategy has also been the subject of widespread consultation with staff and students across the University.

The Strategy identifies the key strategic goals for education, and the main policies and strategies we intend to adopt or develop further to achieve them. It will be supported by more detailed operational plans at School and Service levels. These will be drawn up and reviewed annually, and will inform the mid term review of the Strategy.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Institutional mission

The University's mission is help shape the future by extending the boundaries of knowledge for the benefit of individuals, society and the environment. Our vision is to be a leading international university, recognised [nationally and internationally] for the quality and impact of our research, the quality and value of the education and student experience we offer, and the calibre and employability of our graduates. We aim to be in the Top 10 universities in the UK by 2012 and Top 100 in the world by 2015.

Investing in the future

The University made over 180 new academic appointments in 2008, and a further xx appointments are planned for the coming year, made possible by the University's excellent performance in the 2008 RAE.

In the past five years, we have invested over £140 million in projects such as the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry, the Cornwall campus at Tremough, the Innovation Centre and student residences. Over the next 10 years, we plan to invest a further £450 million in new facilities and buildings, including the flagship £48 million Forum project at the heart of the Streatham campus and the expansion of the Business School, and a further £80 million in science, technology and engineering.

The University's operations at the £100 million Cornwall campus, opened in 2004, continue to expand. Over the next five years, the number of students is planned to increase by xx, and will represent xx % of the total student population by 2015. The University plans to invest £xx million in the creation of the Environmental Sustainability Institute in Cornwall. The institute, supported by EU funding, will be

completed in 20xx and will provide world class facilities for interdisciplinary research into the impact of environmental change on the natural world and society.

SHAPING THE EDUCATION STRATEGY

Current performance

Over the past five years, the University has firmly established itself as one of the most desirable places in the UK to study. It has consolidated its position as one of the Top 20 research intensive universities in the UK and is consistently ranked as providing one of the Top 10 student experiences. Applications for undergraduate programmes have increased by nearly 20% in 2009, and the ratio of applications to places is one of the highest of the research intensive institutions.

Performance on all key indicators continues to improve. Nevertheless, the University remains very dependent on its excellent performance on the NSS, and has further to improve its performance on entry qualifications and graduate employment, if it is to achieve its ambitions to be a Top 10 university.

Challenges

The University is determined to build on current achievements to secure its position as a 'destination university' in the ever more competitive world that lies ahead. It faces a number of challenges.

- Global economic conditions and pressures on the UK public finances pose a serious threat. We must continue to diversify our sources of income, create value wherever we can and invest for future growth. We must also provide value for money and do all we can to help our students enhance their future employment prospects.
- There is increasing global competition to attract the best students, as the range and quality of provision expands, student expectations rise and the number of 18 year olds in the UK falls. We must provide the quality of service, facilities and learning experience to enable us to compete for the very best students, and to attract them away from their home towns to live and study.
- As the number of 18 year olds falls, the demand for lifelong learning and continuing professional development, caused by changes in the economy and supported by government policies, will increase. We will need to respond to the pressures for a wider range of products and more flexible forms of delivery. We will also need to consider the implications of employer led provision.
- The UK Higher Education sector continues to change rapidly. It is witnessing an increasing concentration in research funding in a smaller number of research intensive institutions, and a growing shift in resources towards STEM subjects and medicine, at the expense of arts, humanities and social sciences. We must increase our research capacity and create new opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration.
- As we seek to attract more students from a wider variety of cultures and social backgrounds, and with a wider range of qualifications, we must ensure

that we have in place the systems and services to support them and enable them to fulfil their potential.

- We must also prepare for a future where competition on tuition fees is greater.

THE EXETER EXPERIENCE

The University is committed to offering an education and student experience that is challenging, fulfilling and recognised internationally as being of the highest quality. We believe that this experience should have certain defining characteristics.

- *Providing a challenge*

We are a leading research university and aim to provide learning opportunities that are based on the latest research and which stimulate and stretch our students, to equip them with the skills to meet the challenges they will face and the confidence that comes from doing so successfully.

- *Encouraging personal responsibility and leadership*

At the centre of our approach that encourages the student to be an active, critical and independent learner. We expect and encourage our students to take responsibility for their own learning. We also help them to take responsibility for their own future, by encouraging them to think about their own personal and professional development, and providing them with opportunities to develop, through work placements, volunteering and other community involvement.

- *Supporting each student*

We are committed to supporting our students throughout their journey at the University. We will provide learning support services as well as professional health and welfare support services to meet the different and increasingly diverse needs of all our students.

- *Promoting the whole person*

We believe in encouraging the development of the whole person, through the curriculum and extra curricular activities. We aim to safeguard and promote the general health and wellbeing of all our students. We have excellent sports facilities and offer a wide range of sport, social and other activities.

- *Encouraging social responsibility*

We strongly encourage social responsibility and recognise the benefits of helping to shape one's environment. We are embedding principles of sustainability in the curriculum across all programmes. We have a strong and vibrant tradition of student volunteering in the local community, and we recognise these important contributions through an Exeter Award scheme.

- *Fostering respect and understanding*

We are committed to providing an environment that fosters an understanding of and a respect for difference. We are increasing the diversity of our student community by

encouraging participation from a wider range of cultures and backgrounds. We are also working to internationalise the student experience, not simply by increasing the number of international students and staff that study and work at Exeter but by encouraging exchanges and by introducing an international dimension to the curriculum and campus.

THE EXETER APPROACH

A number of core principles underpin our approach to delivering the student experience.

- *We will deepen and broaden students' involvement in all aspects of their learning*

We believe that the student must be at the heart of all we do. There is a strong sense of community and a long and healthy tradition of student involvement and representation in all aspects of University business governing the student experience. We believe that the student must be a full and active partner in their own learning and in the academic enterprise in general. We also believe that we cannot develop and enhance the student experience without student involvement and engagement.

We see students thus as co-creators of learning and will broaden their involvement in the design, delivery and assessment of their academic programmes, as full members of education communities of practice. We will work with the Students' Guild and student representatives across Schools to achieve this.

- *We will place research at the heart of the learning experience*

As a leading research intensive university, we firmly believe in the central importance and value of research in enhancing the student learning experience. Through a research led curriculum, we provide our students with the opportunity to share the excitement of research and of extending the boundaries of knowledge. And through research inspired teaching and assessment, we encourage and enable our students to develop valuable skills of critical and independent enquiry.

- *We will value and articulate each student's experience.*

We will enable students take from what we offer the elements that create their own individual experience. In this way, we will both enrich the individual student's experience and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. To do this, we will need to provide sufficient flexibility on both content e.g. through modularity and delivery e.g. through greater use of blended learning.

- *We will join up academic and other learning experiences*

We will integrate more closely academic, co- and extra curricular learning opportunities to enrich the overall student experience. To do this, we will need to join up the contributions of different academic staff to ensure that research initiatives are closely aligned with teaching innovations. We will also need to join up the services and learning experiences provided by academic and non-academic staff.

- *We will extend the boundaries of the education experience*

Students respond well to having an education experience which starts before they arrive on the campus (actual or virtual) and continues after they have completed their programmes. This will help our efforts to widen access and to support students in improving employability and employment prospects. To do this, we will need to ensure that 'students' journeys' are seamless and draw on emerging technologies to help make this possible.

- *We will promote and enable new ways of learning*

We will provide new opportunities, through information technology, physical learning spaces and design of the curriculum, to enable students to work and learn collaboratively. We believe that student interaction is key to effective learning and will provide opportunities for students to work together in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

The University has identified seven key strategic goals for delivering its vision of the student experience at Exeter, and around which it has organised its supporting objectives, policies and actions over the period 2010 - 15

Strategic Goals

- (1) We will attract, recruit and retain highly talented students, regionally, nationally and internationally, and enable them to achieve their full potential
- (2) We will offer top quality programmes and curricula at all levels, informed by the latest thinking and research in the field
- (3) We will encourage, support and enable students to develop as active, independent learners, providing them with excellent resources and facilities to do this
- (4) We will empower students to take responsibility for their personal and professional development and enhance their leadership and employability skills, enabling them to become sought after nationally and internationally, whether for further study or employment
- (5) We will ensure that administrative systems and educational structures support and promote quality enhancement
- (6) We will encourage and enable staff to fulfil their goals and ambitions as excellent teachers, researchers and facilitators of learning
- (7) We will provide an environment that values health and well being, embraces diversity, and fosters social and environmental responsibility

Supporting Objectives

The key objectives, policies and action to support the delivery of these goals are set out in the Action Plan at the Appendix.

STRATEGIC COORDINATION

In reviewing the Education Strategy, and in identifying the policies and actions to deliver the revised Strategy, the University has taken into account the wider aims and objectives of the University, and the specific aims and agendas of the different strategies that make up the University's core business. The Education Strategy seeks to support and complement the aims and objectives of other core strategies, notably for Research and Knowledge Transfer, and Internationalisation. It also seeks to exploit the opportunities presented by close coordination of policies and their delivery. Three main themes have emerged.

- *Providing a research rich environment*

The Research Strategy will seek to increase research capacity, and will encourage staff to be more creative in the cross-disciplinary collaborations they develop, within Schools, across the University and with other institutions. The Education Strategy will seek to exploit the teaching dividends of this research effort, as well as continue to embed research in the content and delivery of the curriculum.

- *Developing international partnerships*

The Research Strategy and Internationalisation Strategy will both seek to develop international partnerships, to raise international profile and awareness, increase research capacity, and diversify opportunities for research income. The Education Strategy will seek to exploit these links to broaden the range and scope of work placements and study abroad opportunities to both home and international students to enhance their employability.

The Internationalisation Strategy will rely on the development of international links to increase global brand awareness of the University, and to leverage internationalisation of Exeter across a number of dimensions.

- *Promoting cultural diversity & tolerance*

The Research Strategy aims to attract and retain world class academic staff, including international faculty. Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary work relies on respect and understanding of disciplinary differences and commonalities. The Internationalisation Strategy aims to provide an international feel to the curriculum and campus, and an international 'state of mind'. The Education Strategy will support these aims by creating the conditions, through the curriculum, support services and community activities, to enable students to develop personal responsibility, environmental awareness and respect for others.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Success of the Strategy will be measured against the University's Top 10 Key Performance Indicators for education :

NSS results
% PGT population
Progression/Achievement
UG Entry Standards
Graduate Employment
% International population

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The Education Strategy will be implemented by Schools and Professional Services. The actions highlighted in the Action Plan will be incorporated in School and Professional Services annual operational plans. An institution wide Annual Operating Plan will be drawn up, incorporating key initiatives in these various operational plans, to enable implementation to be monitored and evaluated. The Annual Operating Plan will be updated each year, taking account of both performance and any major changes in the internal and external environment.

A strategic mid term review will take place in 2011-12. This will review overall performance against institutional KPIs and priorities, and take account of both major changes in the internal and external environments since the launch of the current Strategy in autumn 2010, and important emerging developments that are expected to have a material impact on the next planning period 2015-20.

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APPENDIX

EDUCATION STRATEGY 2010–15: ACTION PLAN

[Actions will be reviewed in the light of the outcomes of the consultation exercise and policy reviews currently underway. They will be allocated to individual supporting objectives, with an action lead, outputs and PI as appropriate. Priorities for action, resources and target dates will be identified and reflected in the Annual Operating Plan]

(1) We will attract, recruit and retain highly talented students, regionally, nationally and internationally, and enable them to achieve their full potential

- We will provide a high quality admissions process for all students
- We will provide high quality bursaries and scholarships schemes to attract and retain highly talented students
- We will increase efforts to widen access to highly talented students from different social backgrounds
- We will operate fair, open and transparent admissions policies that recognise the full range of educational qualifications
- We will further increase the quality and number of applications and entrants
- We will ensure that students entering our programmes are given appropriate support, recognising their transition to HE involves experience of different cultures and language

ACTIONS

- *Review all programmes to facilitate entry for students under the Compact Scheme (ie for those who have not met the normal programme entry requirements but who meet the criteria for fair access), including the Mutual Recognition Scheme*
- *As part of the Realising Opportunities, National Access Scheme for 11 Research Intensive Universities, develop our current provision in identifying and recognising talented WP students and support them post entry to graduation and employment/further study*
- *Review all programmes to identify opportunities for language training, and where appropriate accredit language modules as pathways*
- *Review all campus facilities and planned developments to include an international flavour and aspect to facilities and services*

(2) We will offer top quality programmes and curricula at all levels, informed by the latest thinking and research in the field

- We will review and develop taught programmes to ensure a dynamic portfolio
- We will ensure that research-informed teaching permeates the curriculum of all taught programmes and is associated with a high-quality learning experience
- We will enable students to participate in and experience learning that is research led through direct engagement with top class researchers
- We will develop new programmes and modules that cross 'traditional' subject boundaries, either within Schools or between them, which reflect existing or potential research links

- We will provide opportunities for [all] students to take part in interdisciplinary modules and/or programmes
- We will explore ways to embed sustainability, including environmental sustainability in curriculum, that builds on the leading research interests of the subject and School
- We will provide opportunities for [all] students to take part in modules at all levels that focus on sustainability, either within their own subject or across subjects
- We will explore ways to provide an international dimension to the curriculum of [all] programmes

ACTIONS

- *Review all programmes to include reference to sustainability, especially environmental sustainability, that relates to leading research interests of the subject and School*
- *Review opportunities for students to take part in modules at all levels that focus on sustainability, either within their own subject or across subjects*
- *Review opportunities for students to take part in interdisciplinary modules and/or programmes*
- *Review all programmes to include an international dimension in the curriculum*

(3) We will encourage, support and enable students to develop as active, independent learners, providing them with excellent resources and facilities to do this

- We will encourage and support students to take responsibility for their learning by using teaching, learning and assessment methods that are research – inspired and that facilitate and promote both independence and high quality interactions
- We will ensure the provision of high quality learning and teaching resources and facilities, including technology enhanced learning (TEL) resources, to promote active learning in all taught programmes
- We will provide opportunities and resources to enable students to work together and learn from each other
- We will ensure that students have access to appropriate levels of contact and support at all stages of their programme to enable them to develop as independent learners

ACTIONS

- *Review and revise all programmes to demonstrate how they are developing students as researchers*
- *Review all modules to demonstrate how the assessment students are required to undertake contributes to developing their research capabilities*
- *Review all programmes to ensure that they offer an appropriate range of teaching methods and assessment to promote active and independent learning, as part of the continuing review of School assessment and feedback strategies*
- *Provide greater opportunities for all teaching staff to update their practices relating to technology enhanced learning (TEL) and incorporate monitoring of*

training activity and performance in annual performance appraisal (PDR) procedures

- *Enable all modules to be supported by online (VLE based) resources and assessment opportunities*
- *Work with Schools to adopt policies and processes that engage students more closely in the design, implementation and assessment of modules*
- *Work with Schools to define and articulate their policies on quality and level of contact for all forms of delivery*
- *Work with Schools to define and articulate policies on compulsory student attendance*
- *Work with Schools to develop teaching timetables that address current shortages in teaching spaces in the University*
- *Implement School based TEL support scheme*
- *Implement 'Learning and Teaching Incubators' project to enable pedagogic experimentation, in preparation for the opening of the Forum*

(4) We will empower students to take responsibility for their personal and professional development and enhance their leadership and employability skills, enabling them to become sought after nationally and internationally, whether for further study or employment

- We will ensure that all students have full and comprehensive access to high quality direct work experience during their time at Exeter
- We will ensure that the needs and priorities of prospective employers are monitored and taken into account in the design of opportunities for personal development and work experience
- We will support and enable Schools to play a primary role in developing employability skills of students and their future employment prospects, including further study

ACTIONS

- *Work with Schools to develop opportunities to employ our students on graduation*
- *Work with Schools to develop workload models that fully recognise the importance and demands of personal tutoring, peer support and personal development planning*
- *Implement and expand Exeter Award and Leaders' Award Schemes to include new opportunities e.g. to recognise contributions to the sustainability agenda*
- *Implement new School work placement coordinator scheme*

(5) We will ensure that administrative systems and educational structures support and promote quality enhancement

- We will ensure light touch, but robust systems of quality assurance that recognise and respect local responsibility for design and delivery of learning opportunities
- We will develop effective systems for sharing good practice and enhancing innovation
- We will develop effective systems for promoting and enabling institution wide enhancement of learning opportunities

ACTIONS

- *Work with 11 Schools to ensure adoption of the HEAR processes*
- *Adopt a more risk based approach to quality assurance processes*

(6) We will encourage and enable staff to fulfil their goals and ambitions as excellent teachers, researchers and facilitators of learning

- We will develop clear criteria for academic staff to enable excellent learning and teaching to be achieved and recognised during the probationary period
- We will review promotion procedures to ensure that excellence in learning and teaching can be appropriately recognised and rewarded
- We will ensure that staff receive appropriate development and training in learning and teaching at all stages of their academic and professional careers
- We will ensure that research students receive appropriate training for teaching and helping others to learn, including high quality guidance and support.

ACTIONS

- *Review staff appointment policies to enable Schools to employ teaching only posts in accordance with their operational needs and business model*
- *Introduce a universal workload model for different types of activity e.g. teaching, research and administration*
- *Explore scope for a universal set of weightings for each type of staff activity that gives full recognition to the importance and demands of teaching and assessment (by size of cohort and type of delivery)*
- *Implement and expand the seminar series on Inspiring Leadership in Education to include international speakers and visiting faculty*

(7) We will provide an environment that values health and well being, embraces diversity, and fosters social and environmental responsibility

- We will work with all sections of the University, the Guild and the City to encourage consideration of others, tolerance and social diversity
- We will provide opportunities for diversity training for all academic and Professional Services staff to raise awareness and promote the highest standards of conduct

ACTIONS

- *Develop and roll out a programme diversity training for students and staff across all three campuses*