

AQSC Report

Title:	Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy 2015/2020	Date: 28/1/15
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Summary

This report constitutes an overview of the key strategic priorities for Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy 2015/2020. The report identifies key actions and responsibilities across the College. This report provides an update on the progress made against those actions using both narrative /description and the traffic light system below as per guidance by the Skills Funding Agency.

B	Not yet in scope	Blue
R	Not achieved	Red
A	Partially achieved	Amber
G	Achieved	Green

Recommendations

1. Members of AQSC report the update to their Programme teams and disseminate actions to those identified.

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Version Control: 2	Date: 28/01/15
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Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy 2015/2020

Background

Ruskin College faces a number of challenges over the next 5 years as competition in the HE and FE sectors intensifies and the economic and funding environment gets tighter, it can be seen that the regulatory bodies are making ever increasing demands in terms of quality assurance, success rates and progression into employment.

Allied to this the student body is changing as there are increasing numbers of students who will be in work while studying at undergraduate and post-graduate levels, and /or using distance learning or blended learning models. Students where they can are exercising choice in terms of higher education, they are more challenging in terms of value for money and they expect a flexibility of approach that meets their lifestyle choices.

In terms of trade union education the portfolio is continually challenged through changes in the funding regime as a result the College strives to meet the demand to train trade union activists and officers whilst making their training and upskilling accessible in and around work and life commitments.

Short course students are increasingly focussed upon the progression opportunities that we can offer. At the key transitional phase at level three we are taking the opportunity to reconfigure what we do to maximise recruitment and funding.

The competition for higher education recruitment is and will remain intense. Ruskin College will need to innovate in order to maintain and grow its provision.

It is within this context that we continue to develop teaching, learning and assessment that will maximise inclusion, achievement and social justice for our student body.

Key Aim of the Strategy

In order to meet our present and future challenges it is vital to ensure that:

The College provides programmes of study that continue to excite students, provide a range of learning opportunities, foster the skills of independence and autonomy, are cost effective whilst providing students with the opportunity to be part of a vibrant academic community.

The College invests in staff development, thereby promoting an ethos of shared practice/values whilst building upon staff and institutional research interests.

The College continues to strive for excellence in teaching, learning and assessment through a culture of continuous improvement in academic standards and quality.

The College continues to deliver an inclusive model of learning development and support.

The College develops learning and resourcing models that provide sustainability for students, staff and the College.

Strategic Aims over the next 5 years for teaching, learning and assessment are as follows:

- 1. Grow further education provision incorporating English and Maths, residential short courses, Access to HE Diplomas and community learning, through partnership with community organisations and other education providers.**

Within the challenges of a diminishing funding landscape the College remains committed to meeting the skills needs of our local communities whilst making a real difference to the lives of individuals. This will be achieved by providing specialist provision that seeks to upskill and progress students through a transformational deep learning model.

The FE model enables progression for individuals at their own pace. The entry point can be a Maths or English course or a short taster or introduction to learning. The next step can be a Short Course that seeks to build the skills needed to make an impact and provide a preparation for a longer course of study at Pre Access Level. From level 2 students can then progress to the Access to HE programme thereby acquiring the academic skills needed for success at undergraduate level.

Key Actions for 2014/15

- Consolidate the existing further education provision for 2014/15.
 - Develop and implement a further Access to HE Diploma programme for delivery in 2015/16
 - Develop a community learning model as an access point to the College.
- 2. Expand trade union provision at further education level and develop research capacity at higher education level through partnership with the TUC, the GFTU and individual trade unions.**

The College continues to seek to expand trade union provision both with and alongside the trade union movement. This remains pivotal to the ethos and remit of Ruskin College. The College where feasible will grow its trade union offer through a collaborative model and contribute to the challenge of empowering the existing membership whilst clearly contributing to the future growth of the movement's membership.

The development of Ruskin Radical Research Group will become a focal point for not only trade union based research, but more broadly the research interests of the whole college.

Key Actions for 2014/15

- Develop collaborative provision with trade union partners.
- Establish the Ruskin Radical Research Group.

3. Modernise the higher education curriculum and increase flexibility of delivery through partnership with universities.

There are three key drivers impacting upon the HE curriculum. It is evident that HE students are looking for greater choice and flexibility in how they can access their learning. There is also a growing desire from students to access programmes of study that have a very strong vocational route and that will increase the probability of employment or career progression. Funding is crucial and the removal of direct Skills Funding Agency funding for level 4 provision and the consequent tuition fee costs of HE provision for students is not to be underestimated. These drivers result in the following:

The need to develop a highly relevant curriculum that recruits students and meets the personal/professional/vocational needs and progression requirements of our student body.

The need to continually consider opportunities to enhance the range and relevance of programmes and their economic viability. The College will seek partnerships that will facilitate enhancement of our existing curriculum and grow our HE recruitment.

The need to maximise flexibility of delivery and to grow existing recruitment and a commitment to distance and blended learning models, especially around vocational programmes and this will need to be costed and resourced.

A scrutiny of existing and potential provision through the development of a programme portfolio based upon costs of delivery, recruitment patterns and synergy with our core values

A curriculum design model that needs to be a collaborative endeavour with opportunities for working with colleagues, students, stakeholders and key partners. Explicitly the College will address the need for a cross-curricular approach and the sharing of teaching across academic areas, levels and stages.

Key Actions for 2014/15

- Further enhance existing institutional partnerships and develop new partnerships in order to grow student recruitment, while there are opportunities to do so.
- Develop a curriculum design model.
- Explore options and determine which programmes to develop for validation and revalidation in 2015/16.

4. Aim for excellence in both further and higher education using student centred quality assurance systems.

The College is committed to placing the student at the centre of our quality assurance and improvement systems, as such we will continue to evolve a quality assurance system that allows for informed reflection and in turn enhancement of the student experience. The purpose of this strategy is to empower students to develop the skills of public service and

social activism and secondly to enable students to make effective transitions between stages and levels whilst developing skills, academic expertise and independent learning skills throughout their programme of study.

Key Actions for 2014/15

- Implementation of the student voice strategy and action plan.
- Revise the observation of teaching, learning and assessment for further education provision.
- Prepare for QAA review of higher education provision in 2015/16

5. Innovate in teaching, learning and assessment using e-learning and the virtual learning environment.

The key to innovation is the freedom to experiment, reflect, learn and improve. Innovation in teaching, learning and assessment will be partly driven by embracing e-learning and the greater use of the VLE. The exploration of technology will allow for an evaluation of how students want to access learning which in itself will act as a catalyst for imaginative engaging and challenging pedagogy. But equally tutors will develop their strategies through embracing the Higher Education Academy Fellowship Scheme thereby allowing for an evolution of their repertoire of skills whilst fostering a teaching led research culture.

The exploration of e-learning will further improve the design and range of teaching and assessment methods and the quality of feedback, to ensure that they are integrated effectively into the programme structures, contribute directly to students' learning and skills development, are fair and inclusive, and provide an appropriate level of intellectual challenge.

Key Actions for 2014/15

- Establish an e-learning/blended learning strategy.
- Build e-learning/blended learning into curriculum development.

6. Promote equality and diversity across the College community.

To fulfil this key aim the next five years we will establish an inclusive framework at College based upon agreed values and behaviours that promote inclusive practice. We will work to advance and promote equality, diversity and inclusion through all aspects of our practice; we will address achievement gaps and intervene to address inequalities as needed. We will make appropriate reasonable adjustments as needed and where possible in order to maximise opportunity where we can.

Key Actions for 2014/15

- Establish the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee of Academic Quality and Standards Committee.
- Establish the Equality and Diversity impact measures for 2014/15.
- Sign up to Investors in Diversity programme in 2015.

7. Employ excellent staff and deploy human resources efficiently and effectively

The College will recruit exceptional staff who have the right skills and competencies to meet the needs of our student body. Staff who teach should have an outstanding background and demonstrate competence and enthusiasm for teaching and the abilities to communicate effectively and to work with a diverse range of students. Where there are training needs, they should be addressed promptly. Staff development will be inspiring and meet both individual and college needs. A human resources model will be established that ensures that staff are supported and their skills developed in order to provide an excellent student experience.

Key Actions for 2014/15

- Establish a College wide appraisal system for academic staff.
- Develop a bespoke model of tutor development linked to the observation of teaching and appraisal.
- Maximise the utilisation of the skills and working time of the permanent staff.
- Increase participation in the Higher Education Academy.

