



LONDON SCHOOL  
OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

# Learning and Teaching Strategy:

2021 - 2024





## Document Information

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\*The document owner is responsible for maintaining and updating the content of this document and ensuring that it reflects current practice at the School.

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## 1. Context

The purpose of the Learning and Teaching Strategy is to articulate the School's commitment to learning and teaching and to identify how this commitment is supported. The School aims to provide higher education of a quality and kind that will enhance the capabilities, potential and intellectual independence of its students, on a life-long basis.

The strategy also defines the characteristics of higher education teaching, learning and assessment, confirming the expectations and requirements for successful teaching outcomes and sets out the framework for the evaluation of teaching and learning, aligned with the School's core values and national standards for teaching and education.

The term 'teacher' is used to describe all teaching and support staff, including teachers, lecturers, academic and student support practitioners, including the Student Engagement Team and Personal Academic Tutors (PATs). The Principal supported by the Dean of Learning and Teaching, the Course Leaders and the Head of Student Life-Cycle will ensure alignment through consistent appraisal, continuing professional development, communication, and objective setting.

Agreed differentiation, or variation, will be subject to approval by the Principal and Head of Quality, and in alignment with external regulatory and awarding body academic regulations as appropriate.

Our vision and mission is driven by the desire to provide a supportive and inspiring student experience which is open and inclusive, seeking to reduce barriers to learning through equipping students of all backgrounds, abilities, and aspirations to fulfil their potential through learning, achievement, and progression.

## 2. Strategic Aims & Commitments

Key to our success as a high-quality provider of higher education is the implementation of our strategic aims, ensuring the delivery of high-quality teaching through relevant, employment-focused provision enhancing the student learning experience, supported by outstanding physical, digital/IT and human resources, enabling meaningful social and community engagement and financial security. The School's continued commitment to respect, preserve and enhance knowledge through learning and teaching will be demonstrated through the following Key Strategic Aims of the School:

- **Excellence** - Deliver and be known for excellence,
- **Effectiveness and Efficiency** - Secure and use resources effectively and efficiently to sustain high quality learning,
- **Equality and Diversity** - Create a socially inclusive School for students,
- **Ethical approach to the environment** - Promote and support sustainable development to ensure a more sustainable community,
- **Continuous enhancement** of the student environment and experience.

Alongside these strategic aims we will ensure that the School's Values are evident in all the strategies employed to continuously improve the number of successful students through:

- Integrity and quality in the delivery of teaching and assessment of student learning outcomes comprising the student profile.
- The awards provided by our partner universities are accessible and consistent with requirements for a multicultural student population from diverse and unrepresented backgrounds.
- Ongoing review and revision of our partner universities' qualifications, including delivery-based lesson observations and peer reviews as well as input from students, internal and external disciplinary experts and appropriate national accrediting bodies.
- Assurances of appropriate staff and student support necessary to meet the requirements of the learning and teaching process irrespective of location or tuition and study.

The School looks to support its commitment to learning and teaching through:

- Recruitment of academic staff that are committed to delivering high-quality programmes and support staff who provide the services necessary for academic success and retention.
- A curriculum (as designed and approved by our partner Universities) that leads to qualifications at undergraduate (and potentially postgraduate) degree level that reflect the interdependence of scholarship and teaching.
- Quality assurance of study resources such as module descriptors and online learning environments, and any other materials formally made available as part of tuition and course requirements.
- Professional and teaching support provided to staff in the preparation, delivery and ongoing revision and quality assurance of qualifications, courses and materials.
- Access to appropriate pastoral care, academic advice and student learning support available to students regardless of mode or location of study.
- An academic infrastructure of facilities and services, including IT, library, teaching, and learning spaces.
- An environment where there is academic freedom.

### **3. Learning and Teaching Environment**

The School aims to create a vibrant learning and teaching environment, one characterised by collegiality, creativity and intellectual challenge that will inspire both students and staff. It is incumbent upon the School to ensure that it is a place where the highest quality teaching and student learning can take place. This will include providing:



- Fit-for-purpose facilities and resources (e.g., appropriately equipped classrooms, libraries, offices, equipment, IT support and learning technologies).
- Timetabling services where the allocation of rooms and the scheduling of teaching promotes appropriate learning.
- Opportunities for professional development that will support staff in meeting expected levels of performance.
- Policies and strategies that are supportive of teaching and students.
- An environment where teaching is valued and recognised and where development of teaching practice is supported and encouraged.

#### 4. Expected Level of Performance

The School expects all staff to contribute positively to the achievement of a consistent culture of teaching quality. In addition to being able to demonstrate a good standard of performance in relevant areas of practice, this means that staff will show an appropriate commitment to ongoing individual and collegial professional development so that the quality of their teaching is maintained. Teaching and supporting student learning covers a range of activities; the School expects individuals to be effective in any of the following which are relevant to their role:

**Learning design** – staff will plan teaching and student learning activity, be that at the level of the individual session, the module and/or whole programmes, that is coherent and thought-through, which encourages students to work hard and is properly aligned to relevant outcomes.

**Teaching practice** – staff will manage different teaching contexts (e.g., lectures, seminars, tutorials, problem-classes, tutorial supervisions and online environments) and engage students in a variety of ways (including the appropriate use of both face-to-face techniques and on-line/blended learning technologies) to support inclusive and appropriate learning. In their teaching practice, staff will demonstrate an awareness of essential principles of effective presentation and will communicate clearly and effectively. Teaching staff will be evaluated through structured observations each semester (Semester One: teaching observations, Semester Two: peer observations), as part of the School's ongoing appraisal process that enables good practice and adheres to national teaching quality and standards.

**Supervision** – students' overall progress and personal development will be properly supported, managed and coordinated by Personal Academic Tutors (PATs) and the Student Engagement Team in consultation with Course Leaders and Academic Deans.

**Creation of learning materials** – staff, with support from awarding body Link Tutors, as necessary, will take responsibility for producing high-quality and inclusive resources to support student learning (e.g., presentations, handouts, bibliographies, problem-sheets and online and digital resources).



**Assessment** – formative assessment will be well planned and timely so that it informs and drives student learning. Summative assessment will be designed to be valid in terms of assessing what it is intended to assess, in an appropriate way and at an appropriate level and robust guidance and approaches to marking will be followed to maximise consistency.

**Feedback** – staff must provide high quality feedback to students and abide by published return deadlines; high quality feedback will include explaining the standard of work that has been submitted, providing guidance that will enable improvement and supporting students to develop their own skills of self-assessment.

**Administration** – staff will ensure that the administrative tasks relating to their own learning and teaching are carried out professionally (including the coordination of newly appointed colleagues where relevant).

To meet acceptable standards in carrying out these activities, the School expects staff to have an appropriate knowledge of:

- **The subject material they are teaching** – staff will ensure that the material they are teaching is up-to-date and reflects contemporary thinking and themes; sometimes individuals will be asked to teach on topics which do not relate to their area(s) of expertise, but even in such cases they should be sufficiently prepared to be able to structure material sensibly, to teach clearly and to engage students in effective learning.
- **How students learn** – expectations of how material is most effectively learned may vary between (and within) disciplines and may also be dependent upon the nature of the learning that is intended; however, staff should be aware of credible theories of learning and should develop their own understanding based upon these theories, their own experience and that of their colleagues.
- **The level of learning** – staff will understand the level at which to pitch their teaching and assessment and the level of typical student learning that can be expected. Further, they should understand the structure and purpose of the curriculum so that they are clear on what it is safe to assume a student will know based on previous learning and what students will need to know to engage with future learning.
- **Pedagogical principles** – staff should understand the fundamentals of curriculum and learning design within a scholarly teaching environment and an informed perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of different teaching, assessment, feedback, and evaluation approaches (including the application of learning technologies).
- **School and other learning and teaching policy** – staff will abide by School guidance and regulation in the Quality Handbook and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), regarding the organisation and implementation of learning and teaching and likewise should be cognisant of relevant external guidance (e.g., Office for Students (OfS), Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), information and Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements).



**To meet our university partners' expectations and sector benchmarks, we aim to attain and maintain a minimum 80% pass rate in all taught modules.**

## **5. Issues Affecting Performance**

In undertaking teaching and in supporting student learning, the School expects all staff to demonstrate core values, these being a commitment to developing and maintaining professional behaviour and professional skills. Although all staff should aspire towards quality, consistency and continuous improvement, the School recognises that factors may arise which impact upon teaching performance, or the perception of teaching performance.

For example:

- Staff new to teaching may need time to develop their ability through experience and training.
- Where innovations or new modules are being delivered, time for iterative adjustments may be required to work through unanticipated issues.
- Where a member of staff must cover for a colleague or take on teaching at short notice, this may impact upon the perceived quality of their teaching.
- Sickness, leave or other career breaks may cause some disruption in an individual's ability to maintain teaching performance.
- Although all staff will work to make their teaching engaging, some subjects are inherently more difficult and challenging than others, require more and harder work and may be less popular; this could reflect unfairly in, for example, module evaluation scores in a way that does not actually reflect the quality of the teaching that was provided.
- Issues outside of an individual's control can impact upon perception of teaching quality by students: for instance, problems relating to timetabling and room allocation.
- We encourage discussions with your line manager, to assist and relieve any personal or professional issues that may affecting your work performance.

## **6. Support for Staff**

Expectations relating to performance in teaching and the support of learning should be communicated clearly by the Academic Line Managers (Course Leaders, Deans) so that staff are aware of minimum acceptable standards and where their performance stands in relation to these standards.

- Staff will, where necessary, receive support from the School through procedures which are implemented at local level (e.g., peer support for teaching, mentoring, performance review).



- Staff should expect to receive a workload allocation that is fair and which will enable them to carry out their responsibilities to a high standard, that will allow them to contribute to the achievement of the School's strategic objectives and which provides space for personal development.
- Where staff believe their ability to undertake teaching to an acceptable standard is undermined, or where they believe their opportunity to develop their teaching practice is jeopardised, by a deficit in the support they are receiving, it is the responsibility of the individual to raise this issue with the Course Leader for consideration and resolution.

## **7. Learning, Teaching & Assessment**

- The classroom experience should reflect the expectations of the updated UK Quality Code.
- The student is at the centre of the learning experience and an active participant in his or her own learning.
- In planning for learning, teachers should consider the wide continuum of needs and the requirements set out in other relevant documents and policies e.g., the Equality & Diversity Policy.
- The School is committed to the view that assessment is integral to the learning and teaching process. It should be used to improve the student's learning experience.
- Students learn best when they understand clearly what they are trying to learn and what is expected of them. Their learning experience is enhanced by relevant feedback about the quality of their work; it helps them to understand how to improve where necessary, especially when they are fully involved in decisions about what needs to be done and who can help them.
- It is the responsibility of the teachers to ensure that they adopt appropriate assessment procedures and to provide a range of stimulating and motivating approaches to learning and assessment, which should be active and collaborative in focus, and allow students to demonstrate their learning regarding knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes, and capabilities.
- It is the responsibility of the School to support teachers and support staff in planning and providing high quality learning experiences by providing opportunities for professional dialogue, collegiate working, and networking (Learning & Teaching Forum), to facilitate sharing good practice and moderation of standards, and ensuring that the School's resources are allocated to meet learning needs most effectively.





## 8. Learning, Teaching & Assessment Principles

Planning and delivery through this strategy encourages alignment of key principles to be evident in the planning and delivery of all teaching and learning practices. The School believes that by achieving consistency, teaching, and learning can unlock the potential of our diverse student cohorts. Teachers will be deemed to be most successful when their students can demonstrate progress that exceeds the expectations of the syllabus or qualification specification.

1. **Purpose** - all sessions will have a clear purpose that is articulated to the students – this will include the success criteria in the context of the session and the steps required to exceed the specification standard (stretch target).
2. **Assessment for Learning** - all sessions will begin with an evaluation of existing skills and/or knowledge – this may be an exercise or activity, it may be questioning – but it must relate to, and be based on, prior skills and knowledge gained, whilst providing for stretch and challenge; the assessment process will then be continued throughout the session to appropriately gauge learner progress and respond through additional teaching, training and assessment as required.
3. **Readiness** – all sessions must ensure that teachers and their students are appropriately prepared and are ready to participate - teachers will set a positive example through their own readiness and standards.
4. **Individualisation** - all teachers must understand the students' relative starting points which will be dependent on their entry skills and knowledge and how far they have progressed through the planned learning – this will underpin the entire process of lesson planning, whilst concurrently ensuring an equitable and diverse approach to practice.
5. **Planning** - planning must be sufficient to ensure that learning and assessment is always purposeful and that students can learn in a variety of ways; planning should draw on excellent subject knowledge and consider opportunities to integrate wider themes such as British and Group values and learner personal growth by promoting independence and curiosity, English and maths, equalities and respect.
6. **Managing Learning** – teachers must be able to manage the delivery and learning process through skilful classroom management, modelling and technology where appropriate; they should be mindful in their planning of the common stimuli that influence learner engagement (i.e., emotional, behavioural, cognitive factors) and make suitable adjustments where necessary.
7. **Questioning** - questioning must consider students' starting points and will be used effectively to develop, deepen and check learning and understanding; questioning must be both frequent and reaching in learning sessions.
8. **Pace** - Teachers will maintain a suitable pace by providing clear, explicit instruction and by moving briskly through planned theory and practical activity and exercise work (where applicable); if the guided content is covered, teachers encourage their students to consolidate their knowledge and skills and then move on to something new; student-centred activity must have a clear purpose, timescale for completion and success criteria.



9. **Adding Value**- all sessions must add demonstrable value, which will include an element of consolidation, however, it will always contain the delivery of skills and knowledge; students should be encouraged to be curious and independent students. Students should be encouraged to engage in meaningful collaboration between staff and students in programme design, content, and delivery, adopting the concept 'Student as Co-Developer', which seeks to recognise outputs of student research as a valued activity within an inclusive academic community. Regular engagement by, and with, the Student Union President and elected Student Representatives ensures engagement at all levels and facilitates consideration of the 'student voice'.
10. **Feedback** - all students should expect and receive prompt and useful feedback, so that they understand if they have met or exceeded the success criteria and/or what they need to do to improve further – students should be able to confirm that they understand what this means to them, and what they will do as a result; teachers will monitor the impact of their feedback.
11. **Progress** - students should be able to 'showcase' or 'demonstrate' new skills or knowledge throughout their planned learning – if not, then the teacher should reflect and improve the planning and delivery accordingly. The absolute best teachers will engage their students with opportunities that challenge their new knowledge and skills – such as challenging work placement, aspirational higher education applications, skills competitions, additional work, higher level thinking, research and scholarship in their chosen subject, vocation, or discipline.

## 9. Teaching Accountability and Compliance

Accountability for ensuring all teachers, managers and local procedures are aligned to this policy rests with the Executive:

- The Executive will be responsible for driving the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy by actively and demonstrably applying its principles to all aspects of their work.
- They will communicate their decisions, and the strategic thinking behind them, clearly and expeditiously to **Academic Line Managers, Course Leaders and Academic Teams** in order that the cascade of essential information to staff at all levels can be instigated (as appropriate) in an accurate and timely manner.
- They will also ensure that Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy targets are included as a Key Performance Area in the annual performance reviews of all Forum Heads.

## 10. Course Leaders and Academic Teams

All Course Leaders will take strategic responsibility for ensuring the successful implementation of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy within their areas of responsibility. They will also:



- Ensure that all staff are fully aware of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, and acting upon it.
- Provide regular feedback to the Executive through the appropriate methods and cycle.
- Establish channels of communication for staff to express their views and opinions on internal procedures, policies and practices.
- Advise and recommend on future planning for learner issues.
- Make Learning, Teaching and Assessment targets a key result area in staff performance reviews.

Operationally, they will:

- Plan implementation of all aspects of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy within their area.
- Liaise with all personnel within the team who contribute to learner success and provide help and support where needed.
- Include the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy on relevant School meetings involving appropriate personnel.
- Be the change agents associated with the implementation of this Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.
- Influence and guide personnel within the academic teams to use this strategy to improve the pedagogy which in turn will improve the student experience and success.
- Contribute to relevant staff development and scholarship activities to enhance learning opportunities across the curriculum.
- Operate under the School's *Teaching Observation Policy*, by employing both the lesson and peer teaching observations to ensure a high-quality standard of student learning experience.

## **11. All Academic Delivery Staff (lecturers, assessors, and learning support)**

All members of staff who have any responsibility for effective learning, teaching and assessment must engage with this strategy and work to achieve the operational outcomes. They should also:

- Work with peers and managers to use this strategy to improve the pedagogy, which in turn will improve the student experience and success.
- Take part in relevant staff development and in-house staff training to enhance learning opportunities across the curriculum.



Use established channels of communication to feedback views on the impact of this strategy on their practice and the student experience.

*For more information staff should refer to the Staff Learning and Development Policy, available on the staff portal.*

## 12. Academic Integrity Charter

The School is committed to promoting academic integrity and acting against academic misconduct through its practices, procedures and policies. The School's *Academic Misconduct Policy* establishes the behaviours that may constitute academic misconduct and details the investigative procedures for ascertaining appropriate sanctions of academic misconduct.

The School uses a 'whole community' approach when tackling academic misconduct through working with our partnerships to guide our students in upholding good academic practice by acknowledging correct referencing and providing support to students and staff. We collaborate with our partnerships to protect students and staff by sharing any information gathered on essay or degree mills and benchmarking our policies and practices.

Teaching staff play a vital role in discouraging and identifying academic misconduct incidents, as a result, the School provides training and development for staff to protect academic integrity. Through the promotion of trust and confidence in independent learning, the School provides the tools, knowledge and support for students to avoid any academic misconduct and its consequences.

## 13. Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech

The principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech are central to the development of LSST's academic policies and teaching strategies, reflecting the mission of higher education to advance new ideas within an environment where free and objective debate can take place.

The School observes the definition of Academic Freedom defined within the *Education Reform Act 1988* and ensures that members of the academic community are free to:

- i. question and test received wisdom; and
- ii. put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions without fear of legal or disciplinary action

Teaching staff, students and those directing curriculum are jointly expected to uphold a learning environment that is supportive of the principles of academic freedom, objectivity and respectful scholarly discourse.

The School has published a code of practice for the protection of academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law which staff are expected to familiarise themselves with (this is given in Appendix A).

In the management of its learning opportunities, its premises and its off-campus activities, the School will be guided by fundamental values of:



- Respect for democracy and support or participation in the democratic process
- Respect for the basis on which the law is made and applies in England
- Support for the equality of opportunity for all
- Support and respect for the liberties of all within the law
- Respect for and tolerance of different faiths and religious and other beliefs

The Academic Board will periodically review teaching strategies and practices at the School to satisfy itself that its Code of practice on Academic Freedom are duly upheld throughout the institution and it will report its activities and findings to the Board of Governors.



## Appendix: Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech; Code of Practice

In the exercise of academic freedom, all staff, students, governors and any external third parties contributing to the delivery of taught programme at LSST are expected to exemplify the following behaviours, namely:

- i. To be objective and open to new ideas and opinions at all times;
- ii. To ensure academic debate is guided by rational enquiry and supported by sound and reliable evidence;
- iii. To have regard for appropriate ethical considerations when conducting research;
- iv. To clearly differentiate one's personal beliefs from objective academic observations and judgments;
- v. To challenge in a way that is not harmful to others or to the reputation of the School or disruptive to teaching, and discussion;
- vi. To refrain from all forms of discrimination or exclude others from academic activity whether on grounds of gender, racial background, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious belief, marital status, caring responsibilities, or any other personal characteristics;
- vii. To be respectful to the personal beliefs, cultural attitudes, and opinions of others, and not to cause unnecessary distress in the expression of contrary ideas and opinions;
- viii. Not to attempt to impose a set of beliefs on others;
- ix. To listen and take account of views and arguments contrary to one's own beliefs and opinions, whether these be personally or institutionally held;
- x. To ensure that professional or academic activities do not conflict with applicable laws and statutes;
- xi. If communicating in public, staff and students should indicate clearly that they are not communicating on behalf of the School unless expressly authorised to do so.

The School is committed to resolving of problems and controversies by the method of rational discussion. Acts or threats of physical force or disruptive acts which interfere with campus activities, freedom of movement on the campus, or freedom for students to pursue their studies are fundamentally at odds with academic freedom and will not be tolerated by the School.



## Version History

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