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Learning & Teaching Committee

Subject: Strategic priorities in learning and teaching from 2013/14

**Origin:** PVCT

**Executive Summary :** This paper provides a stimulus to discussion of strategic priorities in learning and teaching for a period of up to three years from 2013/14, which will inform the budgeting process.

**Action Required:** LTC is asked to note the contents of the paper as a basis for discussion on 25 October.

A recent e-mail from the Director of Planning to Deans and Heads of Support Services indicated that for 2012/13 the Development Planning process and subsequent budget setting would change. Annex 1 reproduces this e-mail for information.

SMTs in Schools and Support Services are asked to provide an input to the process. Learning & Teaching Committee on 25 October offers an opportunity to open up the discussion on learning & teaching priorities for the next 1 to 3 years from 2013/14, and for colleagues to feedback any initial discussions that they have had with SMTs.

As background, Annex 2 is an edited version of the current Learning & Teaching document that complements the University Strategic Plan, ‘Towards 2016’.

As a prompt to our discussions it would be timely to restate some of the key attributes that we wish to develop in all Loughborough graduates. Some examples are listed below.

**Attributes of Loughborough’s Graduates**

* analytical and independent thinkers
* technically rigorous
* enterprising/imaginative/creative
* globally aware
* clear communicators
* value team working
* confident about their attributes and able to evaluate their personal development

**Priority areas to consider**

Colleagues may wish to reflect on the headings below as a framework for our discussion.

**Student recruitment, fair access and the first year experience**

* ensure that the transition to University and the first year undergraduate experience is effective (This links directly to the Student Engagement Project which includes within it the Student Charter, induction, personal tutoring)
* what about the experience of FT PGs, particularly international, for whom speedy adaptation to UK study can be challenging?

**Programme development**

* launch new subjects which builds on strengths and for which there is a demand
* ditto new UG/PG programmes
* develop flexible models of study at PG level including credit transfer from international partner institutions (cf. UG study abroad model)
* should we invest in greater DL provision beyond niche areas as an alternative to campus based blended learning, particularly at PG level?
* ensure market research support is provided when new programmes are proposed

**Curriculum development and quality**

* ensure all programmes are of consistently high quality and responsive to student views
* achieve consistently high levels of student satisfaction across all programmes
* embed a strategic approach to technology-enhanced learning within all programmes
* ensure skills progression within curriculum is clear to and valued by students

**Learning opportunities explicitly identified in programmes**

* offer professional work or study abroad opportunities to all UG students during their degree
* embed ‘enterprise’ and ‘international learning’ in the UG curriculum, defined appropriately for different subject areas
* develop work/internship opportunities for PGTs during their studies
* identify and launch new institution-wide or School-base initiatives designed to enhance the quality of the student experience

**Student and staff support**

* firmly establish professional support service input to the curriculum, which is coordinated effectively
* pursue programme of continuous investment in physical and virtual learning spaces to ensure consistently high quality provision
* develop well-resourced language support centre which is high profile and accessible to all students within and/or beyond the curriculum

**Staff development initiatives, recognition and reward**

* identify and launch new institution-wide and/or School-based initiatives that enhance staff approaches to teaching (eg. CPD, peer observation, enlarged award scheme for innovation etc)

**To note:**

* The above are prompts and other suggestions are welcome
* During the time period specified LU may develop teaching/research /enterprise activities at Olympic Park. Some points above will be relevant to this.
* Not all initiatives will require additional resources. Please consider the kinds of additional resources that would be needed in particular cases within Schools and Central Services

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**ANNEX 1**

**E-Mail from Fidelma Hannah to the following recipients sent on 11 October 2012**

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The attached proposals for changes to the Planning and Budgetary process were discussed at ALT and approved by Operations Committee earlier this week.

The main change to be implemented this year will be to combine the implementation and development planning processes. The PVCs, DVC, COO and Director of Finance are being asked to prepare development plans for their areas of responsibility by mid-December 2012. These plans will build on the priorities that have already been identified for 2012/13 and provide a longer-term view of the developments that they would like to make. There will be no set format for the plans but we are suggesting that they should be about 4 sides of A4 and focus on the next 1-3 years.

In order to ensure that Schools and Support Service Sections can contribute fully to this process, we would ask you to discuss the future strategic direction of your School or Support Service Section within your Senior Management Team and provide feedback (via Associate Deans if appropriate) to the PVCs, DVC, COO or Director of Finance. It would be helpful if you could provide this feedback by **23 November 2012.**

The Planning Timetable allows for full discussion of the development plans during January and it is intended that they will directly influence the establishment of budget priorities.

The attached paper and timetable also identifies the key dates and meetings for setting the 2013/14 budget.

I hope that this helps to explain the new process but feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

**ANNEX 2**

**Loughborough University Strategy 2006 – 2016**

**Learning & Teaching**

**1. Context**

Loughborough’s defining characteristics are its student-centred ethos and outstanding national/international reputation for high quality teaching and student learning. We are committed to research-informed teaching and to developing programmes of study that build on our exceptional reputation for effective collaboration with external partners in business, the public sector and the professions. Learning and teaching forms an essential part of the broader Student Experience at Loughborough. It is developed in close partnership with the student community, including the unrivalled support of the Students’ Union.

Since the last Strategic Plan as Loughborough’s popularity as a place of study has grown significantly, entry grades have been raised across a majority of undergraduate programmes and home recruitment has increased. The University has placed a growing emphasis on the national policy objective of fair access although the institutional benchmark levels agreed with OFFA continue to be challenging. Our record for graduate employment is impressive in many though not all subject areas.

In line with the University’s research-intensive objectives, our postgraduate community has grown, notably our international student population, as new opportunities have been created at Masters and Doctoral levels. A Graduate School was established in 2006 to enhance postgraduate opportunities and support.

**Key influences both internal and external:**

* impact of a significant increase in tuition fees in 2012 on home UG student expectations of university and the implications for home PG recruitment
* external funding support that favours a diverse student population and varied modes of programme delivery
* developments in’ transnational’ education and increasing competition globally for international students
* influence of new learning technologies on student approaches to learning
* changing needs of graduates in a volatile global employment market
* national evaluation regime which focuses on student perceptions of quality
* external institutional review process combining quality assurance and enhancement and with a strong focus on the student voice
* impact of the REF on the balance of staff time and commitment to teaching quality and research performance

**Vision**

We will

* build our international reputation as a leading UK provider of research-informed education
* provide diverse opportunities for all students to develop qualities of critical enquiry and independent learning within a supportive and intellectually stimulating learning environment
* expand our portfolio of activities in order to equip Loughborough graduates and postgraduates for the challenging opportunities of a rapidly changing global environment
* continue to work with our students to listen to their needs and encourage their participation in enhancing the quality of learning and teaching

**2. Strategic Aims**

* To foster a broad disciplinary profile that complements and enhances institutional strengths in research and enterprise;
* To build on the University’s outstanding reputation in learning and teaching in order to increase the attractiveness of Loughborough as a place to study for a diverse student community;
* To expand our national and international partnerships in order to remain a leader in the provision of education that engages with external agencies, business, industry and the professions
* To enrich the learning environment in order that all students have the support to succeed in their studies
* To promote an ethos that expects and encourages the enhancement of teaching and learning with a focus on the desired capabilities of our students;
* To support, recognise and reward excellence in learning and teaching in ways that advance our exceptional reputation.

**3. Strategic Objectives**

In fulfilling these aims, the following strategic objectives relate to our key areas of activity.

**Curriculum profile -** We will maintain a strategic approach to programme and subject development that enhances Loughborough’s distinctive profile and anticipates changes in national and international student demand

**Student Recruitment -** We will strengthen the quality and academic potential of the student body, continue to diversify its composition, and build our postgraduate community

**Widening participation -** We will refine out approach to outreach and widening participation in support of our Access Agreement targets/benchmarks

**Student learning opportunities -** We will expand significantly and diversify opportunities for students to enrich their international learning on campus; study in different settings in the UK and internationally; and engage with external organisations

**Student learning resources and support -** We will increase investment in learning and teaching infrastructure in order that all students benefit from access to excellent resources and support

**Learning and Teaching Enhancements -** We will develop and implement an institutional strategy for systematically enhancing the quality of provision

**Staff recognition and reward -** We will strengthen and refine our academic practice approach to learning and teaching and ensure that our reward mechanisms align with the University Strategy

**4. Critical Success Factors**

* Continued recruitment and professional development of outstanding academic and support staff
* Effective and efficient student recruitment activities generating a pool of well-qualified applicants to achieve student recruitment targets
* Competitive scheme of support for students linked to higher tuition fees
* High-profile learning and teaching support that provides pedagogic leadership and a framework of professional standards for academic staff
* A network of professionally skilled support staff to assist academics with learning and teaching developments
* Coordinated learning support network for students on taught programmes, and well-established Graduate School
* High quality student information system and VLE covering student progression and support from application to alumnus

**5. Key Strategic Risks**

* Failure to match UK/EU intakes with recruitment targets
* Failure to meet international recruitment targets
* Failure to attract well-qualified students
* Engaging in institutional partnerships without due diligence
* Poor internal and external evaluations of teaching quality and learning support
* Insufficient engagement by staff in relation to priorities in research and enterprise
* Insufficient investment to keep pace with developments and competitors

**6. Changes Required**

Continuous development will be required in a range of areas including the following:

* Evaluation and enhancement of UG and PG programmes and the introduction of new ones in areas of student demand
* Provision of high quality teaching across all programmes and effective pedagogical approach to blended learning
* Learning opportunities within and beyond the curriculum linked to internationalisation, enterprise, placements and work experience in external organisations
* Teaching facilities and informal learning spaces which are fit for purpose
* Flexible models of PG programmes associated with employer/employee engagement
* Graduate School that adds value and meets/exceeds PG student expectations
* Promotion to prospective students of an exceptional student learning experience with distinctive opportunities linked to employability

**7. Summary of key Performance Indicators**

These cover student recruitment; completion and degree classification; student satisfaction; and employability. Institutional targets and benchmarks are reported to Council. The DVC and Deans regularly review School level targets and benchmarks.