Executive Summary
Colleges, Support Groups and the Edinburgh University Students’ Association are invited to consult their constituencies and comment on the draft Learning and Teaching Strategy, and on the proposed approach to integrating it within the University’s planning cycle. The Strategy is designed to be high-level, while being sufficiently clear that Schools, Colleges and support groups can evaluate their contributions to it.

How does this align with the University’s strategic plans and priorities?
Aligns with the Strategic Goal of Excellence in Education and the Strategic Theme of Outstanding Student Experience.

Action requested
For discussion

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?
The Senate Learning and Teaching Committee plans to approve a final version of the Strategy at its meeting on 16 November 2016. Feedback from Colleges is requested by 1 November 2016. In CSE, this will be discussed with representatives from Academic Services during College Learning and Teaching Committee.

Resource / Risk / Compliance
1. Resource implications (including staffing)
   None – currently at consultation stage
2. Risk assessment
   N/A – any risk assessment to be conducted by Academic Services
3. Equality and Diversity
   N/A – any required Equality Impact Assessment to be conducted by Academic Services
4. Freedom of information
   Open

Key words
Learning, teaching, excellence

Originator of the paper
Senior Vice-Principal Charlie Jeffery (presented by Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services)
For consultation - draft University of Edinburgh Learning and Teaching Strategy

Background

The University’s Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy is due for review by the end of 2015-16. The current version is at:


Revised University Learning and Teaching Strategy

At its meeting in September 2016, the University’s Learning and Teaching Committee has agreed to consult on the draft Strategy (attached), which would replace the existing Strategy.

College Learning and Teaching Strategies

The Colleges’ current Learning and Teaching Strategy documents are available at:
http://docstore.mvm.ed.ac.uk/PoliciesAndProcedures/LearningAndTeaching/LTstrategy.pdf

The CSE and CHSS documents are due for review in 2016 (the MVM document does not have a specific review date). At present, the Colleges are taking distinctive approaches to their Strategies. All were drafted in the context of an extremely high-level University Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy that provided very limited direction.

Proposed approach to implementing the revised Strategy

The revised Strategy (once approved) could: guide strategic learning and teaching plans in School, College and Support Groups; guide the activities of the Senate Committees; and provide a framework and set of key messages for communications to staff and students. This could be achieved by:

- Schools, Colleges and Support Groups using their annual plans to summarise their strategic actions to address the University’ Learning and Teaching Strategy in ways that can be evaluated;

- Ensuring a clear link between the annual quality review process and annual School and College planning processes; and

- Asking the Senate Committees to prioritise and articulate their plans in relation to the Strategy on an annual basis.

This could be achieved through an annual planning cycle along the following lines:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicative timeline*</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Colleges and Support Groups</th>
<th>University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Late August</strong></td>
<td>Schools to consider whether any of the key themes and actions from the annual Quality Review process require them to modify any of their strategic plans for learning and teaching set out in their School plans</td>
<td>Colleges to consider whether any of the key themes and actions from the annual Quality Review process require them to modify any of their plans</td>
<td>Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) to highlight any issues from the annual Quality Review process which are relevant to the implementation or further development of the University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autumn</strong></td>
<td>As part of the University planning cycle, Schools to reflect on progress against the L&amp;T aspects of the previous year’s School plan</td>
<td>As part of the University planning cycle, Colleges and Support Groups to reflect on progress in their plans in relation to learning and teaching</td>
<td>Senate Committees to take account of the University’s L&amp;T Strategy when identifying key Senate Committee priorities for the planning round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>January / February</strong></td>
<td>Schools to submit plans which incorporate their strategic actions for taking forward the University’s L&amp;T Strategy</td>
<td>Colleges and Support Groups to submit plans which incorporate their strategic actions for taking forward the University’s L&amp;T Strategy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>March</strong></td>
<td>Schools to meet with key College and University leaders (eg Deans, Senior VP) to discuss the learning and teaching elements of their College plans, and to discuss progress against last year’s plans.</td>
<td>Key College and Support Group staff to meet key University leaders (eg Senior VP) to discuss the learning and teaching elements of their College and Support Group plans, and to discuss progress against last year’s plans</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>April</strong></td>
<td>Schools to take account of feedback when finalising their School plans</td>
<td>Colleges and Support Groups to take account of feedback when finalising their plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>June</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Senate Learning and Teaching Committee to review the L&amp;T elements of School and College / Support Group plans to highlight key themes, and review overall progress against the University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Exact timelines for planning may vary between Colleges and Support Groups*
Contact information

If you would like to discuss any issues relating to this consultation, please feel free to contact Tom Ward (Tom.Ward@ed.ac.uk), or contact me directly.

Senior Vice-Principal Charlie Jeffery  
27 September 2016
University of Edinburgh Draft Learning and Teaching Strategy

The University aims to be recognised nationally and internationally for research-informed learning and teaching of the highest quality.

We will work in partnership with students to nurture a learning community that fosters engagement between staff and students and supports students by:

- Ensuring effective representation of student views at all levels of the University and across all modes of study;
- Enhancing the Personal Tutor system to deliver sustained, effective academic support;
- Reviewing how accessible, high quality pastoral support is best communicated, provided and accessed within Schools and from specialist support services including the Careers Service, Chaplaincy, Student Disability Service and Student Counselling;
- Developing assessment and feedback that strengthens dialogue between students and staff while supporting student progression through programmes of study;
- Supporting our academic units to build a stronger sense of community for both staff and students;
- Reviewing and enhancing the way that our physical and digital estates support high quality learning and teaching and interaction between staff and students;
- Exploring how learning analytics systems can help Personal Tutors provide effective academic support.

We will foster a culture of high performance in teaching and assessment among our academic staff by:

- Stating clear expectations of high quality teaching and assessment in our staff recruitment and annual review processes;
- Building robust sources of evidence on the quality of teaching and assessment;
- Celebrating, recognising and rewarding the best teaching and assessment practices underpinned by and contributing to pedagogical research;
- Celebrating success in teaching and assessment in the internal and external communications of the University;
- Building communities of practice which support innovation and diffuse good ideas across the University;
- Embedding professional development in teaching and assessment as a routine feature of academic work;
- Ensuring opportunity for reflection, development and innovation in teaching and assessment in workload modelling;
- Reviewing the role and use of postgraduate tutors.

We will use the flexibility of the standard four-year undergraduate degree structure to build a rounded learning experience including:

- The opportunity to develop as a researcher from year one and, in the Honours years, to specialise and to develop the research and inquiry-led skills to support original research in the core discipline;
- The opportunity to access courses and learning experiences to equip students for whatever path they follow once they graduate, including:
  - Greater integration of graduate attributes and employability skills in all programmes;
  - University-wide courses in a broader range of skills, for example quantitative methods, digital skills and languages;
The opportunity to encounter courses and modes of learning outside of a student’s core discipline(s), and to develop academic skills alongside students from all parts of the University;

A strengthened focus on the coherence, subject depth and focus of flexible programmes;

The opportunity for all students to have an international learning experience;

A focus on reviewing and enhancing the experience of students on joint Honours programmes.

We will offer our postgraduate taught students the opportunity to develop cutting edge skills and knowledge in their chosen field by

- Developing our range of interdisciplinary programmes, drawing on world-class research expertise from across the University;
- Building on and growing the University’s portfolio of online learning programmes and using them to experiment with new approaches to learning and teaching;
- Ensuring the quality of postgraduate teaching, assessment and student experience across all modes of study.

We will develop and enhance our curriculum by:

- Embedding the University’s excellence in research in all our teaching and assessment;
- Promoting diversity in the curriculum;
- Supporting a culture of active and engaged students by providing opportunities for independent, student-led, and co-designed learning within and beyond students’ main programme of study;
- Recognising experiential learning in the community, in businesses and other organisations, nationally and internationally;
- Committing to the creative use of digital technologies in our teaching and assessment both online and on-campus;
- Utilising our world-class libraries and collections in innovative and research-led ways to enrich our curriculum, whilst reflecting on and articulating our future needs for libraries and collections to deliver our learning and teaching strategy.

We will maximise academic and professional support staff time devoted to core learning and teaching activities by

- Ensuring through the Service Excellence Programme that that the University has high quality, efficient student administration and support services;
- Reviewing the nature and duties of the academic role;
- Simplifying academic policies and processes regarding learning, teaching and assessment whilst ensuring that all students across the University are treated equitably.

This Strategy complements the University’s Strategic Plan and other key University documents, including the University’s Recruitment Strategy, Equality and Diversity Strategy, People Strategy and IT Strategy. It is further supported by a number of subsidiary and more detailed strategies including:

- Student Employability.
- Student Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- Widening Participation.