

**BRUNEL UNIVERSITY****LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY (2011/12 – 2014/15)****Context****[Link to the Strategic Plan \(2008-12\)](#)**

Since 2008, the University's learning and teaching strategy at institutional level has been subsumed within the Students' Plan (2008-2012), a supporting plan of the University Strategic Plan (2008-2012). The new Learning and Teaching Strategy (LTS) builds on the progress achieved under the Students' Plan, at the same time as reflecting the changing needs of the University as it enters a period of rapid change in Higher Education. The new LTS is the culmination of a significant process of consultation of both students and staff at all levels of the University.

The LTS also builds on the University's current Strategic Plan (2008-2012). Relevant parts of the University's Strategic Plan 2008/12 are set out in an appendix to this strategy and noted in the Aims section.

The LTS is intended to reflect the priorities of the current Strategic Plan by supporting the development of a learning environment that fosters the confidence of students, enhancing their experience both through their studies and in extra-curricular areas, and develops distinctive graduates whose experience will have an emphasis on critical thinking skills, be shaped by an institutional culture of research and reflect engagement with employers. More generally, the LTS reflects the broader ambitions set out by the University in its Strategic Plan: that the University will strive for excellence in education and research, be creative and research-intensive, be strongly defined by connections with the wider world and value the contribution of staff. It aims to achieve this enhancement through setting objectives and actions through which innovation and a quest for excellence will be fostered across the University's programmes and their delivery.

The LTS assumes that the 'size and shape' of the University's student population, subject-mix and school structure will continue. It does not seek to direct the kinds of subjects which the University will offer in the future, but seeks to provide an enabling environment within which strategic enhancement of learning and teaching will be achieved and the aims set out in the current Strategic Plan can be fulfilled.

In the event that the University determines to refocus its strategic direction in its next Strategic Plan, this may require some changes to the LTS. Given the immediate challenges and uncertainties facing the HE sector as a whole (discussed in the next section), an appropriate degree of flexibility has been incorporated into the LTS to provide a basis for subsequent redirection. This flexibility is most evident in the commitment to build capacity in the delivery of high-quality part-time provision in particular, and in the commitment to take planned steps towards the enhanced use of information technology in the support of taught provision more generally.

Without pre-empting the future strategic direction of the University, therefore, the LTS has been prepared with recognition that a new Strategic Plan will itself shortly be in preparation.

For these reasons, it is proposed that the effectiveness of the plan should be fully reviewed no later than at the end of the third year of operation (i. e. at the end of 2014/15).

Where the LTS sets out proposals for further review of institutional policy (for example in the case of policies relating to academic support) the resource implications of any recommendations arising from those reviews cannot be fully assessed at the present time, but will need to be identified and submitted for approval alongside the policy proposals. It is anticipated that the resource implications of LTEPs will be subsumed within the current annual arrangements for the discussion and approval of School Plans.

### **Future Challenges: 2012/13 and beyond**

It is evident that the University faces immediate and significant challenges. The University is in the process of making renewed commitments to widening access under changes to UK Government policy on fees. These national changes will also impact on student fees and government funding of HE. With effect from 2012/13, new students will begin to pay a far higher fee, although the potential for this to lead to additional funding for HE will be severely mitigated by a significant reduction in the direct funding of HE by the UK Government and, potentially, the outcome of UK Government review of overseas student visas. At present, it is also unclear in precisely which ways and to what extent the changes to UK Government policy will alter student choices with regard to institution of study, subject of study and mode of attendance. A further significant context for UK HE is the current period of UK and global economic recession, with its corresponding impact on the career prospects, at least in the short-term, of new graduates.

These changes, and the associated uncertainties, need to be reflected in the LTS. First and foremost, the LTS recognises these developments in its emphasis on actions which will achieve enhancement in areas of learning and teaching which are currently identified by staff and students as core: the quality of support for students, including teaching, and, as the University moves forward, cultivating the conditions in which staff are supported and encouraged to pursue excellence in learning and teaching. These are complemented by a renewed focus in the strategy on the employability of students; a focus on good programme design and delivery with a particular emphasis on phases of transition to and from HE and progression through programmes; and an increasing, strategic, use of information technology in the support of learning and teaching.

Embedded within the monitoring and review section of the LTS is a recognition that the effective delivery of the strategy will only be achieved if it is underpinned by an understanding of the present student demography, and by a capacity to monitor and act upon changes to this in the future. It is clear that access to HE as a manifestation of social mobility is a stated priority of the present UK Government, although the impact on this on the demographic of the University, which performs strongly against several of its widening participation benchmarks, remains to be seen.

### **Key Features of the New Strategy**

The LTS sets out an approach to the enhancement of learning and teaching which envisages 'strong' schools and subject areas that are enabled by the University to determine the details of the content or delivery of their provision, and therefore a student experience which is characterised and

enriched by a close identification with the students' school and subject area.<sup>1</sup> It builds upon the work already undertaken to develop revised regulatory frameworks for taught programmes which uphold standards through clarifying truly common sets of regulations, but which also provide a context for the fuller recognition of sandwich placement learning and for innovative programme design and delivery.

In support of this, the LTS sets out a series of institutional priority areas for action under four broad themes which reflect the changing landscape of HE: enhancing the attributes of Brunel graduates, enhancing programme delivery and design; enhancing support for students' study; and ensuring effective leadership in, and recognition for, learning and teaching. It sets out a series of 'principles / objectives' under each theme. This approach reflects feedback from colleagues that the University would benefit from a more detailed statement of common purpose in how it will develop learning and teaching across the institution, which can be used to inform planning and review at all levels. At the same time, the approach is intended to enable the creativity of schools and subject areas by not being prescriptive about the ways in which they should address particular principles / objectives, and to allow diversity of approach where this fosters excellence.

The development of Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plans (LTEPs) by schools or subject areas is intended to enable effective conversations between the schools and LTC regarding the implementation of the overall LTS and to facilitate discussions between schools and central units which support the development of learning and teaching in schools, or support the learning of students. LTEPs will build on the 'action-based' practical approach of existing NSS plans, and will provide a crucial link between the intentions of academic units and medium- to long-term central planning with regard to the provision of central support for staff and students, for the provision of support for TEL and development of other elements of common infrastructure. It is envisaged that LTEPs will be considered at least annually by LTC, but it is equally envisaged that they will be practical, useful documents which will act as point of focus and reference for schools and central units on a more regular basis.

The resourcing of the strategy is explored in more detail in the Implementation Plan. Where the resource implications are subject to the outcome of further review or activity, this is noted. The need to maintain academic sustainability (with particular reference to the workloads of staff) while developing an institution-wide framework for the support for students' study is noted as a matter of particular importance in the context of Theme Three, 'Support for Students' Study'.

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<sup>1</sup> The LTS has been written in a manner which recognises the variation in size, in number of subjects and internal organisation of the University's schools. It envisages that engagement with the strategy will either be focused at school or subject area level, as deemed appropriate by each school in consultation with Learning and Teaching Committee.

## Learning and Teaching Strategy

### Strategic Context

The University sets out its high-level strategy in its Strategic Plan.<sup>2</sup> Most significantly for the LTS are its commitments:

- to be a world-class creative community that is inspired to work, think and learn together to meet the challenges of the future.
- to provide society with confident, talented and versatile graduates;
- to provide a learning experience that challenges our students and helps them to reach their full potential;
- to aspire to the vision, creativity and intellect, high standards and record of successful and practical delivery of projects of Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

### The Aims of the Strategy

1. To change the experience of learning and teaching in the University for both students and staff, through:
  - 1.1. an enhanced and more explicit recognition of study as a partnership, which places responsibilities on both the University and its students;
  - 1.2. a renewal of the University's commitment to provide opportunities for high quality learning and teaching and to seek excellence in its learning and teaching;
2. To support and enhance areas of existing strength in our learning and teaching, notably:
  - 2.1. maintaining a strong identification between the educational experience of the student and (i) their subject area; and (ii) our ongoing research activity within that discipline;
  - 2.2. an enhanced recognition that employability for the modern graduate is based on both academic and extra-curricular activities, and a renewed commitment to placement and other kinds of experiential learning;
  - 2.3. support for innovation in programme design and delivery;
  - 2.4. maintaining the quality of central resources which support student study and, in particular, enhancing the integration of those activities with the work of schools where this is of benefit to students;
3. To add significant and strategic new areas of strength to programme delivery and student support which reflect the changing needs of students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in particular:

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<sup>2</sup> Fuller extracts from the Strategic Plan 2008-2012 are set out in the Appendix.

- 3.1. better support for flexible approaches to study, including an enhanced use of new technology, which reflecting the changing needs of full- and part- time students, whether they are on- or off-campus;
- 3.2. taking active steps to optimise the amount of student contact time with staff which is 'quality contact time',
- 3.3. a greater emphasis on student experience at the points of transition to and from the University, and on supporting student progression through their programme of study;
- 3.4. an enhanced recognition that employment for many students has a global perspective and will increasingly include the consideration of environmental and sustainability issues;
4. To establish stronger structures for the support of innovation and excellence in learning and teaching on the part of staff, leading over time to the achievement of sustained, evolutionary enhancement;
5. To ensure that appropriate mechanisms and resources are in place to support staff in the delivery of the strategy;
6. To recognise and support effectively the diverse needs of our students in relation to learning and teaching through all aspects of the strategy.

## Themes, Principles and Actions of the Strategy

### Themes of the Strategy

To make the priorities within the LTS more visible, the document is set out in four interrelated themes.



### Theme One: Enhancing the attributes of Brunel graduates

#### Principles / Objectives

To enhance the capabilities of graduates from Brunel's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes we will:

1. Enhance the knowledge and skills of our first degree and postgraduate taught students by exploiting opportunities for the University's research activity to inform its taught provision;
2. Foster opportunities for students to learn from first-hand experience of workplaces and employers; we will also ensure that we have in place appropriate connections with the employers of graduates and relevant professions, so that the connections between the learning opportunities provided by all our programmes and the capabilities expected of all our graduates remain current and strong;
3. In support of their development of skills in life-long learning, provide opportunities for students as active learners so that:

- 3.1. they acquire the skills to refresh their knowledge and learn effectively which they will need throughout a professional career;
- 3.2. the methods of assessment which we employ in our programmes encourage and measure the development of these skills in life-long learning in our students;
4. Ensure that our students have an awareness of how changes at a global level may impact on their subsequent careers (for example sustainability and the implications of climate change, changing patterns in geopolitics, advances in information technology);
5. Continue our commitment to the support of extra-curricular activities, including supplementary development of skills (e.g. ECDL) and knowledge (e.g. enhanced language skills), as an opportunity for students to enhance their graduate experience and future employability;
6. Enhance the opportunities for our students to articulate their academic and extra-curricular achievements through the development of enhanced records of achievement.

### Commentary

Strong connections with industry and other professions remain a key feature of the Brunel ethos, and a potential source for the attraction of students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Within the LTS, 'graduate' refers to students completing undergraduate / first degrees and postgraduate taught degrees. First degree study should enable the acquisition of knowledge and skills at a basic graduate level. Postgraduate taught programmes offer opportunities to extend the student's areas of knowledge and skills in preparation for work inside or outside higher education. However, the capabilities of graduates from undergraduate or postgraduate taught programmes are not only concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and skills which have immediate currency.

A capacity for lifelong-learning (the ability to engage in critical thinking and independent learning which will enable them to refresh and acquire new skills at a graduate level) throughout a career is essential to the professional workforce of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Attributes associated with capable graduates which will be particularly advantageous in their future careers will be versatility, adaptability, confidence, and team-working.

To ensure the ongoing relevancy of our programmes to the destinations of our graduates, we will ensure that we maintain strong connections with employers and relevant professions. This will take different forms in different subject areas, but is likely to include seeking the input of employers' representatives and former students through advisory boards or other mechanisms for consultation. Where possible this will include the provision of, and encouragement and support of students to participate in placement learning, internships and other opportunities for students to gain experience in workplace environments.

The University already fosters a range of activities which can augment the attributes which our graduates offer to prospective employers and assist their entry to the graduate workplace. This includes such activities as volunteering and other forms of work experience, sport, Made in Brunel, Business Life, language classes, and various other training opportunities focused on achieving

success in the graduate job market. These activities provide opportunities for all students who participate to develop new skills and gain new experiences, but in some cases will be of particular value to those students not in a position to take up opportunities for placement learning which is integrated into degrees. Where these activities are 'extra-curricular', or have 'extra-curricular' components which fall outside the scope of our academic awards, we will consider how student involvement in them might be further encouraged and better recognised (for example, in the context of the national Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) initiative).

Some of aspects of this theme will be less relevant to the aims of some of our postgraduate taught provision. However graduate attributes are also expected of graduates of these programmes who enter the workforce. We will therefore seek to identify and implement those aspects of this Theme which are appropriate to our postgraduate taught students alongside those of our undergraduate students.

### Actions

#### **Action One: School Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plans**

Proposed actions in relation to principles 1 to 3 under this theme at subject / school level will be expressed in each school's LTEP. LTEPs will be considered by LTC on an annual cycle (see 'Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategy', below)

#### **Action Two: University Graduate Attributes Steering Group**

The University will, building on the work of the current high-level employability group, set up a Graduate Attributes Steering Group to provide leadership, focus and coordination of how the University implements this theme of the LTS. (The Group would comprise members of institutional academic leadership, comprising representatives of schools, PCC, Marketing).

The Group's priorities will be to:

- oversee the development of a new **Graduate Portfolio scheme** to publicise and recognise activities undertaken by Brunel students in relation to leadership in extra-curricular activities,
- oversee (on an on-going basis) the alignment of central support for the *graduateness* agenda with LTEPs (including sandwich placement provision, centrally-provided generic employability skills training, the new Graduate Portfolio Scheme;
- support (on an on-going basis) schools in the development and implementation of LTEPs in this area;
- develop and maintain an overview of University's performance in relation to sector performance in employability and appropriate benchmarking for performance;
- work with schools to identify new opportunities to publicise success in employment to prospective applicants / current and former students ('completing the circle');



- in consultation with the schools, define an institutional approach which ensures that all students develop an understanding of long-term developments which will affect a 21<sup>st</sup> century graduate in the workplace.

## **Theme Two: Enhancing programme design and delivery**

### Principles / Objectives

We will foster the development of innovative and distinctive provision which will enable the study of students. We will focus in particular on:

1. Promoting the central idea of 'study', defined as a holistic combination of learning, teaching and assessment in the design and delivery of our programmes, and support this through strong regulatory frameworks which protect the standards of awards;
2. Developing our capacity to deliver high-quality provision which offers good opportunities for students to study on a more flexible basis, including the strategic adoption of technology enhanced learning (TEL) in the delivery of our programmes where this is advantageous to students;
3. Enabling effective student transition and progression within our programmes:
  - 3.1. with particular reference to transition into Level 0 and Level 1, we will ensure that the design of our provision reflects the range of needs of our student body taking account of our ongoing commitment to widening access into HE, and provides an inspirational entry to higher education;
  - 3.2. with particular reference to transition from our programmes, we will ensure that their learning experience leaves graduates well-prepared for life beyond university;
4. Through the design and delivery of our programmes, taking active steps to make a higher proportion of student contact time with staff 'quality contact time'. This will include exploring opportunities to use TEL to become less reliant on physical large-group teaching and prioritising the opportunities for face-to-face interaction between staff and students to be in the context of smaller groups;
5. Ensure that the delivery of all provision meets collective institutional expectations with regard to good professional practice.

### Commentary

We recognise that new students join Brunel with an increasingly diverse range of prior educational experiences. We further recognise that in the period of this strategy the nature of higher education is likely to change yet more rapidly, with national changes to the widening access agenda, an

emphasis on greater student choice, and the possibility of increasing numbers of students wishing to pursue higher education on a part-time or other more flexible basis. As a result, the design and delivery of programmes which are sustainable, attractive and relevant to students during this period is likely to present particular, and sometimes new, challenges.

Programmes (undergraduate or postgraduate) which nurture strong capabilities in their graduates and which will be sustainable post-2012 will need to demonstrate the characteristics of being:

- attractive;
- relevant;
- stimulating / inspiring;
- motivating / engaging;
- challenging;
- supportive, including in the provision of opportunities for formative assessment and feedback;
- efficient from the perspectives of staff and students;
- effective in enabling student learning.

During the period of the current Students' Plan, we have undertaken significant initiatives to establish new regulatory frameworks for undergraduate and postgraduate taught awards, which will assure the standards of our awards through a more transparent articulation of how achievement is recognised and the more explicit recognition of placement learning. As part of these developments, in particular the way in which our undergraduate framework allows a range of approaches to modularity, we are already taking steps to put the concept of 'study' at the centre of our thinking about programme design and delivery. We need to remain committed to ensuring that our programme content, methods and assessment to enhance the natural transition of students into and from their University programme and their progression through the programme. We should continue to support the development of relevant and constructive summative assessment strategies and methods, and pedagogical innovation, for example through initiatives, including Level-based summative assessment and holistic summative assessment.

We recognise that students continue to value highly contact with staff and other students as a core part of their learning experience. However, students (full-time and part-time) increasingly want in addition to have access to learning resources and other elements of the provision through more flexible methods. We also recognise that HE belongs to the wider 'knowledge economy' in which much of its graduate workforce is employed, and that this needs to be reflected in the ways in which we design and deliver our programmes of study. We will continuously and actively develop our delivery strategies and methods to reflect the changing nature of learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: our response to this needs to embrace the enhanced use of TEL in effective individual learning support and improved large-group dissemination methods and also the corresponding opportunities to explore a lesser reliance on teaching which is based on physical large-group presence. Through this we will aim to put a greater focus onto small-group activities and into ensuring that a higher proportion of contact time between staff and students becomes 'quality contact time' (time when the opportunities for students to benefit from face-to-face contact with staff are being optimised). Successful enhancement in these areas will also leave us well-prepared to respond to

possible significant changes of demand within HE in the future, for example to a future expansion of interest in part-time provision or other more flexible modes of learning.

We note the particular importance of enabling the ‘progression’ and ‘transition’ of our students through the design and delivery of our programmes. Our students ‘progress’ as they demonstrate an increase in the level or volume of their knowledge, skills and capacity for learning. ‘Transition’ relates to the particular needs of students at key points of progression, in particular on first commencement of studies, on the commencement of a high level of study and on concluding a programme of study and moving on to further study or employment. Curriculum planning, learning and teaching methods, assessment strategies and methods, all contribute to the shaping of the opportunities for progression and transition. We recognise that the needs of some groups of students (including some international students and some students entering higher education by non-traditional routes) may require particular attention with regard to transition and progression at all points of their studies, but in particular at the point of transition into HE.

We also recognise that the delivery of our programmes should be underpinned by notions of good professional practice which are shared by all staff involved in the delivery of programmes to students, in such areas as the presentation of lectures and circulated materials. At a base-line level, these notions have not yet been, but could be, articulated in a statement of good practice.

Except where the relevance is evidently for first degrees, we will seek to apply the principles set out under this theme to both our first degree and postgraduate taught provision.

### Actions

#### **Action One (continued): School Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plans (See above)**

Proposed actions in relation to principles 1 to 5 under this theme at subject / school level will be expressed in each school’s LTEP. Schools would be supported by existing central provision for the development and design of programmes, and for the development / implementation of the VLE. Setting out longer-term plans (3-5 years) relating to the use of TEL, in particular, in their LTEPs will facilitate the planning and development of appropriate central support and infrastructure. Schools would also be supported in their planning by a new Steering Group (See Action Three below).

#### **Action Three: University Steering Group for Innovation in Programme Design and Delivery**

The University will set up a Steering Group for Innovation in Programme Design and Delivery to provide leadership, focus and coordination of how the University implements this theme of the LTS. (The Group should comprise members of institutional academic leadership, representatives of schools, Staff Development (including PDAP programme), and the Learning Technology Team).

Core activities of the group will include establishing a **Rethink Forum**. The Forum (building in an expanded form on existing activities, such as the Learning and Teaching Symposium) would draw together existing expertise to provide a central focus for, and foster collegiality in support of, enhancement in programme and assessment design. (This will include a focus on building

institutional expertise to support potential post 2012 developments such as increased levels of part-time study, increased student periods off-campus.) The emphasis of the Rethink Forum will be on 'peer' activity: the encouragement and support of academic staff in schools to develop new approaches, innovate, and to share good practice and advice. As well as convening 'live' *fora* for the presentation and discussion of innovation, the **Rethink Forum** would establish and maintain an online repository of research and resources.

This Group will additionally oversee the piloting of new initiatives relating to the transition and progression of students, and make recommendations for the wider adoption of successful practice in these areas.

The Group will also oversee the introduction of enhanced opportunities for academic staff to undertake research / development work on a subject relevant to L&T agreed jointly by school and LTC (in the form of a secondment). These would complement the existing Learning and Teaching Innovation Fund by providing opportunities for staff to become involved in more substantial projects, for example a project equivalent to one term's activity.

Finally, this Group will take a lead in the development of a **published good practice guide to teaching and other aspects of programme delivery**, for 'flagship re-launch' to staff and students. The guide should set out standards of good practice, for example relating to the presentation of teaching, alongside advice on the support available for colleagues to enhance their practice and / or share their innovative practice.

#### **Action Four: Successful completion of the implementation of revised regulations for UG and PGT programmes**

LTC will continue to oversee the implementation of the new undergraduate regulations and, following the graduation of the first full-time undergraduate students from three year degrees in 2012/13, evaluate the initial cycle of operation to ensure the appropriateness and effectiveness of the regulations in practice, making use of external benchmarking. . It will also oversee the current on-going work to refine the regulations for postgraduate taught provision and the implementation of any changes arising from that exercise, and, in due course, evaluate the effectiveness of those changes.

## **Theme Three: Enhancing support for students' study**

### Principles / Objectives

1. We will develop over time an enhanced, integrated, network of support for students' study. This will encompass:
  - 1.1. student access to support for study through key points of contact with staff in schools (including feedback on students' work), including personal tutoring), applying the principle of seeking to optimise the access to students to quality contact time with staff;
  - 1.2. enhancing the integration of the activities of central units and schools in support of student learning to better meet the actual need of students;
  - 1.3. an increased use of electronic and non-electronic information and learning resources to support learning, in line with the changing needs of students;
2. We will continue to listen to and communicate with students through liaison committees, student representation and other processes for feedback on academic matters and undertake actions required to ensure that students are effectively supported in their studies.

### Commentary

The theme of 'Support for Students' Study' has two strands. One is concerned with the infrastructure (including the human infrastructure) for the support of individual students in their studies. The other strand is concerned with the infrastructure within which we listen to student views collectively to evaluate and improve our provision.

The first strand encompasses the infrastructure of human and other learning resources which have a crucial role in supporting the studies of students. To meet the needs of students, this infrastructure needs to be well-integrated with the design and delivery of programmes.

With regard to the access of students to support for their learning, it will be essential for the University to set out a broad institutional policy framework for the support of students which reflects both the priority placed by students on contact with human support (whether in the form of face-to-face support from academic staff or other members of staff), but which also recognises the potential of the developing possibilities for remote support from staff, or for students to receive support in alternative ways (whether delivered through the use of new technologies or in other ways). This framework needs to give due regard to the role of the personal tutor in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and to balance the principle of optimising quality contact time between staff and students against a recognition of the levels of resource available. Establishing policy at a 'framework' level will enable schools to implement it in ways which best reflect local subject needs.

Where it is to the benefit of students, we will endeavour to facilitate the integrated working of central units and schools in the support of students (for example in the provision of library resources, or skills training). We will need to continue to identify improvements to our central services (including teaching and examination timetabling in relation to both full-time and part-time

studies), our IT and library provision to better support and meet the actual need of students and to better focus on the priorities set by this strategy. It is evident that some aspects of the wider infrastructure, for example effective timetabling of teaching, impacts very significantly on the overall quality of the experience of our students.

The second strand to this theme encompasses our responsiveness more generally to a dialogue with our students concerning their academic experience. We recognise that the economic and technological context in which students now study has implications for how we can best support them. We consider that the quality of experience which we aim to provide in this will only be achieved through an ongoing process of listening to the views of students and planned enhancement of their support. We also recognise that, while not all requests from students will be met, the openness with which the dialogue is held with students helps to create a positive working environment for both students and staff.

These principles should be implemented equally to our first degree and postgraduate taught provision.

#### Actions

##### **Action One (continued): School Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plans**

Actions in relation to principles 1 to 2 under this theme at subject / school level will be expressed in each school's TLEP (direct development of NSS plans).

##### **Action Five: Review institutional policy relating to the support of students' study**

The University will, as a matter of urgency, set up a working group to establish an institutional policy framework relating to academic support for students' study: the review will establish a common framework for the support to which students are entitled from academic staff at school level, and should also look at the articulation of school-level support with central provision of support for students (ASK, etc), which should continue to be provided by the University as part of a comprehensive framework for support. The framework should aim to allow schools the flexibility, in their provision of support, to be responsive to the local needs of students in how that support is provided, but should also identify principles which should be applied institution-wide.

The review should explore the potential for use of TEL to provide individual learning support as part of this framework. Taking account of the recent report prepared by the Union of Brunel Students on personal tutoring, the existing Role and Responsibilities of Senior Tutors and Personal Tutors document should be revised and updated and form part of the new institutional policy framework. The proposals for the framework should also be informed by recent initiatives in relation to the provision of feedback to students.

The working group will need to consider in detail issues of resourcing and sustainability in relation to its recommendations relating to the future institutional policy framework, including the workloads of academic staff involved in providing students with support.

The working group will oversee a 'flagship re-launch' of support for students' study at Brunel and also assist schools in updating of the coverage of academic support in their existing NSS plans to form part of their TLEPs.

**Action Six: Continued provision of central *workshops* for the sharing of good practice in relation to academic support for students**

The convening of 'student experience workshops' should continue, to provide a central focus for enhancement and innovation, in support of the implementation in practice of the new policy framework (once available).

**Theme Four: Ensuring effective leadership in, and recognition for, learning and teaching**

Principles / Objectives

Our principles / objectives in relation to this theme are to:

1. Ensure an appropriate alignment of staff recruitment, recognition, development, and reward mechanisms to support the delivery of this strategy;
2. Ensure that appropriate management, leadership and organisation are in place for the delivery of high-quality programmes and enhancement in learning and teaching;
3. Foster collegial engagement in matters relating to learning and teaching to enable the pursuit of excellence in the development and sharing of innovative and good practice.

Commentary

We recognize the importance of collegiality and teamwork, and also of academic leadership and management in the delivery of a high quality student experience. We will therefore continue to keep our policies under review to ensure that we have structures in place across the University to support this.

Academic staff are central to the design and delivery of learning and teaching, and therefore of this strategy. However, due recognition needs to be given to the role of other staff in supporting the experience of students during their period of study with the University and enabling the work of academic staff.

In this regard, the LTS is crucially supported on an ongoing basis by the Staff Plan, which is concerned with the support and development of the University's staff resource, and in the implementation of the strategy by the training and development opportunities offered through Staff Development, the PDAP and BAPP programmes.

These principles should be implemented equally to our first degree and postgraduate taught provision.

### Actions

#### **Action One (continued): School Learning and Teaching Enhancement Plans**

Actions in relation to principles 2 and 3 under this theme at subject / school level will be expressed in each school's TLEP (direct development of NSS plans).

#### **Action Seven: Review mechanisms for leadership in, and recognition for, learning and teaching in schools**

It is proposed that a review group be set up to consider, as a whole, the University's long-term policy needs in relation to this theme and the delivery of the other objectives of the learning and teaching strategy. The review group should be organised on a schedule to enable its recommendations to feed into the development of the next Strategic Plan. Its remit should include considerations of academic sustainability and it should make recommendations on the resourcing of its recommendations.

### **Further Actions Associated with the Strategy**

#### **Action Eight: Development of a Student Charter to articulate at institutional level responsibilities towards and expectations of students**

LTC should oversee this development, in line with national developments and the other initiatives set out in the LTS. A Student Charter would underpin an enhanced sense of collegiality and valuing of roles of staff and students; help to manage the expectations of students; and enhance attractiveness of the University to prospective students through providing a visible set of high-level commitments.



**Action Nine: Alignment of processes for monitoring, review and approval of provision in the light of the LTS and provision of supporting management information.**

LTC should oversee a review of relevant programme-related processes (e.g. annual monitoring, regulatory audit, academic programme review and programme approval) to ensure these appropriately reflect the principles of the LTS and outcomes of the actions arising from it. LTC should ensure that adequate and appropriate management information is available to support these processes.

