



# **UNIVERSITY LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY 2018 – 2023:**

PROVIDING A TRANSFORMATIVE AND CO-CREATED EDUCATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE



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Over the course of more than a year, staff and students at De Montfort University (DMU) discussed best practice in teaching, learning and assessment, and co-created the University Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (ULTAS) you see here. Through a series of workshops and focus groups, the University community decided what it means to support and enable the best possible education: that which transforms, takes account of difference and individuality, and arises from common aspirations to succeed.

As Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), I'm proud to offer DMU its ULTAS and to work with staff and students alike to realise its potential. We will offer transformational teaching and learning experiences, transformational technological support, and transformational degrees. A DMU degree is a degree for life that will change students' lives.

Wherever our students want to go, DMU will take them there. I commend this ULTAS to you, and look forward to working with you to create pedagogies and an academic experience that works for all.

# TRANSFORM OUR STUDENTS BY DELIVERING AN INDIVIDUAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

## University Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2018 – 2023: Providing a Transformative and Co-Created Education and Student Experience

A De Montfort University (DMU) degree is a degree for life. We aim to equip all students, whatever their level and mode of study, with the knowledge required for successful transition to their next stage. A DMU education will answer the imperatives of the twenty-first century and produce agile, creative, thoughtful and resilient graduates, capable of meeting challenges with versatility, and eager to apply their knowledge for the good of all.

We will transform our students through an individualised, distinctive student experience based on curricula created with and for students, their teachers, and employers and rooted in international and professional experience. DMU will redefine the academic experience for students in higher education, through innovative course delivery in an inspiring and inclusive learning environment. Through our commitment to enhancement, innovation and the highest standards of teaching excellence, we will consistently engage students in improving their academic outcomes and satisfaction with their higher education experience.

We will enhance the digital capabilities of our students and develop the digital, technical and professional teaching and leadership capabilities of our academic staff. We will provide learning spaces that take advantage of technological advances and allow for the development of cutting-edge teaching and learning practices. We will equip students and staff with an understanding of the challenges of sustainability and sustainable development, and will approach learning, teaching and assessment mindful of the opportunities to contribute locally and globally to the public good and environmental futures as well as of our impact on a resource-limited world.

We will establish DMU as the UK's higher education leader in Universal Design for Learning (UDL), through our rigorous and responsive teaching methods and excellent support for students. Our Institute for Education Futures will provide a stimulus and locus for world-leading pedagogical research with a direct impact on our own teaching and learning practice. We will support all academic and teaching staff in gaining and maintaining appropriate credentials and will provide institutional resources to encourage pedagogical innovation.

Our Strategy is based on supporting progression, decreasing non-continuation, and raising attainment. We will value every student as unique and build models of responsive teaching and learning opportunities. We will understand the needs of students at risk of academic underachievement and adopt targeted approaches to monitoring, supporting and addressing individual needs. We will implement and evaluate the effectiveness of new initiatives, both curricular and co/extra-curricular, that close the differences in student outcomes associated with ethnicity, gender, mode of study, disability status or any other characteristic. We see this as integral to the mission of a university awarded Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

Our strategy comprises three pillars. Each contributes to an overarching emphasis on engaging students and staff to work together to construct and maintain an education that equips graduates to fulfil their ambitions and allows their teachers to be responsive, creative, and flexible.

# CO-CREATION

DMU regards its students as co-creators in learning and teaching. We will seek to develop curricula that respond to student needs and employer expectations, through conversation and consultation. Ours is a scholarly community, enriched by its inclusive, responsive and partnership-based learning environment. Students will be co-producers of knowledge.

## WE AIM TO

### a. Facilitate the dynamic co-creation of learning opportunities and development of academic disciplines

through the involvement of students, academics, employers, professional bodies and the De Montfort Students' Union (DSU). We will offer supportive, individualised learning through feedback and exchange between students and staff in a stimulating and inclusive environment. We will support the co-creation of knowledge through partnering with students as creative collaborators in enhancing curricular content and in inspiring and deepening learning, ensuring relevance to their future aspirations. We will create and fund roles of Undergraduate/Postgraduate Learning and Teaching Consultant (UGLTC/PGLTC) from within the student community to support co-creation.

### b. Enhance curriculum design and delivery to challenge, inspire and engage,

enabling students to explore interdisciplinary learning and global perspectives. We will engage students in developing their own learning experience and in quality enhancement activities so that they can demonstrate increasing independence and confidence, taking responsibility for their own learning and application of knowledge, skills and understanding. We will develop course design and content through expanding our partnerships with local, national and international employers, building new links with our academic departments and students.

### c. Deliver university-wide relevant and supportive mentoring and peer mentoring

that enriches the student experience. We will explore drawing on our expanding alumni network in this area. This will support our students in achieving their full potential, strengthening their learning environment and developing greater engagement and interactions among our scholarly community.

### d. Embed employability and enterprise throughout students' courses of study.

We will commit to and invest in developing widespread placement opportunities for our students in partnership with local, national and international employers. We will establish relationships through co-created curricula that will support appropriate and meaningful placements.

## KPI

- Consistently high participation in Module Level Feedback (MLF)/Course Level Feedback (CLF)/National Student Survey (NSS)
- An effective and engaged relationship with DSU, course representatives, and Student Course Representatives
- Growing participation in the mentoring schemes led by and for students

## KPT

- 'Student voice' satisfaction above 80% in the NSS
- Incremental increase in the number of students named UGLTC/PGLTC and percentage of staff working with them
- Incremental increase in the percentage of students acting as mentors and participating as mentees



# BUILDING CAPABILITY

DMU understands that each student enters university with different levels of readiness and prior attainment. We will provide an education that recognizes this variety of student need and equips academic staff to meet it. We will support students and their teachers with the tools necessary for a successful learning and teaching experience.

## WE AIM TO

### a. Embed teaching excellence into staff recruitment, staff development, appraisal, reward and recognition.

We will ensure that exceptional teaching practice is supported, valued and recognised through the appropriate accreditation, including DMU's Higher Education Academy (HEA) relationship, the Teaching Enhancement Scheme, the Vice-Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Awards (VCDTA), DMU's Teacher Fellows (DMUTFs), and National Teacher Fellows (NTFs). We will continue to invest in excellent teachers via the Early Career Academic Fellowship (ECAAF) programme. We will work with the student body to ensure that the student voice is heard.

### b. Enrich programme design and delivery through pedagogic innovation and scholarship.

We will further develop our vibrant teaching and learning environment, and improve teaching quality through staff development initiatives that ensure that pedagogic research and innovative thinking informs course delivery and content. We will drive creative and empirical pedagogical research and scholarship, develop staff and student peer mentoring capacities, and build staff and student networks. We will work with our recognized excellent teachers (see 2.a) as a professional cohort of experts to advise on and support DMU teaching and learning initiatives.

### c. Develop a digital capabilities framework to ensure that students and staff gain and enhance essential skills and the confidence required to use them fluently.

We will offer a comprehensive programme of development activities for staff with a focus on Universal Design for Learning (UDL – see below), teaching practice and digital capability. We will imbue our staff with the confidence and capability to build upon their creative use of technology and learning spaces and provide funding for innovation. We will use technology to enable communication, collaboration, co-creation and reflection. We will develop our use of analytics to determine engagement and to facilitate students' reaching of their potential by providing targeted learner support interventions.

### d. Provide an effective and innovative learning environment.

We will expand and improve our Library and Learning Services offer along with our teaching facilities and learning spaces, to ensure there is a close alignment between course requirements, staff and student expectations, and the quality of provision. We will explore making resources available in customisable formats.

## KPI

- Steady decrease in the number of students required to resit assessment
- Consistently performing above our benchmark in NSS and TEF metrics
- Consistently performing above our benchmark in highly skilled employment metrics

## KPT

- Percentage of staff with teaching and learning achievement recognition (including but not limited to HEA, DMUTF, NTF, VCDTA)
- Increasing percentage of students progressing to the award of their degree and those graduating with Good Honours
- 85% or above student satisfaction with Personal Tutoring and Learning Resources in the NSS

# UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

UDL is DMU's flagship approach to making learning accessible to all, regardless of circumstance. We will provide all students with the opportunity to succeed and develop according to its principles. Students will hone their strengths while successfully meeting new challenges with the prospect of achieving to the highest level, irrespective of prior qualifications, individual learning styles, and differences such as ethnicity, age, gender and disability status.

## WE AIM TO

**a. Encourage all students to explore the importance of their personal growth while at DMU.**

We will work closely with DSU and other partners to identify and facilitate opportunities. We will signpost student support mechanisms through SAAS and academic provision within and across programmes, schools/departments, and Faculties. We will aim to ensure a holistic approach to the curricular and co/extra-curricular offer.

**b. Recognise students' differing approaches to the assimilation and synthesis of information.**

We will support and facilitate the development of independent study, research and employability skills. We will encourage and expect student effort and engagement, offering support and environments that are effective in developing the knowledge, skills, attributes and work readiness of students. We will investigate new ways to support part-time study through flexible degree structures.

**c. Provide effective personal tutoring that supports individual progression and academic growth.**

Personal Tutors will promote academic achievement, academic and personal well-being, and through-life learning on an individual basis. They will help ensure that each individual student is known and valued and that needs are recognised to support successful transitions into, during and after their studies at DMU. We will explore creating centralised staff and student support through the role of a Senior University Tutor.

## KPI

- Reduction in the BAME attainment gap
- Incremental development of programmes supporting flexible, multi-modal, and part-time degrees
- Diverse and accessible curricula in all programmes

## KPT

- Measurable improvements in non-continuation, module assessment average, and Good Honours outcomes in programmes selected for Course Specific Intervention
- #DMUglobal/DMUWorks opportunities embedded in every programme of study
- Overall student satisfaction significantly above the NSS benchmark; CLF student satisfaction consistently above 75%; MLF feedback scores consistently above 3.5





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