Learning for the future
LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: 2015–2020
Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I recommend to you this Learning and Teaching Strategic Framework. The pages that follow outline a bold new approach to the education of future generations at this University, and I commend the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and his team for their work in its preparation.

Education transforms lives. It encourages creativity and curiosity, broadens our imaginations and widens our horizons. And in a world driven by information, it is more important than ever.

As the pace of progress increases, the formality of learning is changing, and universities must embrace flexibility and adaptability to flourish. Today’s students are vibrant, forward-looking and driven. They come to us with a wide variety of experiences in learning from prior educational settings and life experiences. They arrive from many countries and a rich panoply of family, societal, ethnic and national cultures.

Today’s students have their eyes on tomorrow – their possible futures, opportunities for further study and careers. The needs of their future employers greatly influence their choices about what and where to study. Employability matters: Their degree is the door to a better career, their university key to the realisation of their ambitions.

This framework places graduate capabilities at the centre of learning and teaching. Students will learn deeply in their chosen subjects, but the methods of teaching will foster skills that apply beyond the classroom and into the workplace. Cross-disciplinary learning will give students not only expertise in their field, but also a new perspective on its place in the world. Internships, work experience and entrepreneurial guidance will help them apply their skills and understanding to real problems, and encourage them to grow.

Learning is a voyage to discover the world, new ideas, and ourselves; as teachers we are guides for the generations that follow. This framework charts our course, and gives us the means by which we arrive on those unknown shores.

I look forward to the journey.

Professor S Bruce Dowton MB BS MD FACMG FRACP
Vice-Chancellor and President
Getting the student experience right is the biggest challenge that faces any university. The biggest part of this challenge is offering a learning and teaching program that is engaging and interesting, challenging, meaningful in the context of individual aspirations, and well matched to expectations.

The Learning and Teaching Strategic Framework – presented here in summary form – will enable us to develop just such a program. It is in keeping with our University’s history of innovation in learning and teaching, as well as our commitment to being a university where it is good to be a student.

This framework has been the subject of extensive and intensive consultation and global benchmarking. An evidence-based strategy, it reflects not only the collective advice of the University, but also research findings and experience drawn from universities around the world. As things stand, we face challenges in understanding how the digital and physical campus experience should optimally articulate because the pace of change – both cultural and technological – is so rapid. The approach we have adopted is informed by evidence that the modern student is likely to learn best when face-to-face experience is combined with sophisticated and interactive digital resources.

We also know that there is increasing scepticism about the value of a university degree in the workplace. Given that the evidence shows aspirations towards employment are a primary driver for a vast majority of students, this is a significant challenge to the business models of most developed-world universities. However, we believe that the framework will enable us to add value to the student experience by increasing our engagement with other organisations – and in doing so, we will also add value to our partners. We are on the cusp of a major development of Macquarie Park, which gives us a unique, timely opportunity to realise our ambitions for our students in ways that would not be available to most other universities. We are not starting from scratch – PACE (Professional and Community Engagement) already engages 70 per cent of our students.

This framework is for the long haul, and it reflects – often quite directly – many of the aspirations and innovations of our founders. The sustainability of our University will only be achieved by staying focused on our core foundational values and understanding how those values can endure and continue to guide us in a rapidly changing world.

We have the rare capability to be a university that both cares about its students and achieves a global significance in research. I still sincerely believe that, and I am looking forward to seeing that capability express itself as we work through the stages of this Learning and Teaching Strategic Framework.

Professor John Simons
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
The University community has developed three key objectives to guide our learning and teaching activities. These objectives capture a range of goals that, when combined, forms a connected learning community dedicated to the service of its students. The objectives cross faculties, departments and disciplines, and highlight unique and valuable ways for every office, department, faculty and portfolio to engage with the University’s educational mission.

A connected learning community

- **Students as partners and co-creators**
- **A sense of belonging**
- **Integrated digital experience**
- **Connected learning experiences**
- **Coherent program-based design**
- **Work and life skills**
- **Breadth, depth and context**
- **Collaborative activities**
- **Development, recognition and reward**
- **Connected aspirations**
- **External partnerships**

CONNECTED LEARNING EXPERIENCE

CONNECTED CURRICULUM

CONNECTED PEOPLE
Key objective 1: Provide connected, creative and innovative learning experiences

1.1 CREATE A SENSE OF BELONGING
Build learning experiences that provide clear aspirational pathways for students while enabling flexibility and independence with appropriate support and inclusiveness.

1.2 STUDENTS AS PARTNERS AND CO-CREATORS IN THEIR FORMAL LEARNING
Design connected, creative and innovative learning experiences for and with our students.

1.3 INTEGRATED DIGITAL EXPERIENCE
Blend digital and physical spaces to integrate learning activities online and offline, on and off campus.

1.4 CONNECTING LEARNING ACTIVITIES
Build linkages between disciplines and develop deep engagement with research, external partners and co-curricular activities.
Key objective 2: Ensure deep, broad graduate capabilities through a connected curriculum

2.1 A PROGRAM-BASED APPROACH TO CURRICULUM, OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT
Create a curriculum focused on program-level student outcomes while balancing resources, academic requirements and market position.

2.2 EMBEDDED WORK AND LIFE SKILLS THROUGH EXPANDED INTERNSHIP AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
Ensure all programs include experiential or work-integrated learning, with an internship opportunity available to students in all undergraduate programs.

2.3 RESEARCH-LED DISCIPLINE CONTENT
Develop and embed teaching models and practices that support students’ engagement in the process of acquiring and creating knowledge, in understanding how knowledge is produced, and in critiquing it as required.

2.4 AN UNDERSTANDING OF LEARNED EXPERTISE IN BROADER CONTEXTS
Embed key literacies in transferable skills, internationalisation and intercultural considerations, sustainability, and Indigenous perspectives.
Key objective 3: Foster a culture that supports excellence

3.1 CONNECTED ASPIRATIONS
Prioritise resource allocation for design and delivery of teaching that is motivated by demonstrably beneficial student outcomes.

3.2 SHARED RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES
Establish a Learning Commons to reduce duplication, widen access to existing resources within the University, share our own work and adapt the work of others where appropriate.

3.3 BUILDING EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS
Invest in and support partnerships with future employers seeking the best graduates, with community groups that can mutually benefit from involvement in our programs, with alumni who would like to contribute to or benefit from a teaching activity at Macquarie, and with external academic or government partners with aligned interests.

3.4 DEVELOPMENT, RECOGNITION AND REWARD
Provide continuous development opportunities that are aligned with professional standards and promotions criteria, cultivate a teaching excellence pathway, and facilitate activities that may lead to and support external professional recognition for academic staff.
The next decade will see enormous change in higher education. Macquarie University will be at the forefront of this renaissance. To remain agile, we must empower those who understand their disciplines best to seize new opportunities as they arise, to take risks and to try new ways of doing things. We will ensure ownership of learning and teaching lies with those who understand it best: the teachers, the departments and the faculties.

As we move forward, we will continue to focus on high-quality educational outcomes, recognising that what helped us achieve our current position will no longer take us where we are going. We will embrace the uncertainty that comes with life on the cutting edge in the service of innovation and a more valuable experience for every student. Supporting all this will be the adoption of new technology to enhance the learning experience. Online and blended learning will augment traditional learning practices and ensure students can learn at any time, anywhere. Behind the scenes, analytical systems will help identify students who need more support, enabling early intervention to ensure every student has the best possible chance to succeed.

The future starts today.
1. Develop a coherent, integrated and holistic student engagement plan – from recruitment to graduation and beyond – built around identified cohorts, incorporating targeted support services and marked by significant milestones.

2. Develop and test scalable models and metrics to enable and monitor provision of internship opportunities to undergraduate students.

3. Establish an annual ‘incubator-style’ program to enable students to progress entrepreneurial projects.

4. Review and revise the Graduate Capabilities statement, associated policies and resources.

5. Review and revise policies, procedures and data resources to enable team-based curriculum development.

6. Establish a review and reaccreditation cycle to inform curriculum development and learning activities that support student retention, progression and success.

7. Formalise statements for responsibilities, incentives and accountabilities for executive deans, associate deans, heads of department, program directors and unit convenors in learning and teaching.

8. Review and revise the Academic Promotions Policy to include equivalent weighting for research and teaching activities, and structure a complementary teaching excellence pathway.

9. Consider renaming ‘lecturer’ and ‘senior lecturer’ titles to ‘fellow’, ‘scholar’ or ‘assistant professor’ in the Academic Promotions Policy (and elsewhere as required).


Targets: By 31 December 2016

1. Target and engage industry and/or community advisers for participation in program development – including assessment design – and review cycles.

2. Commence embedding of employability and entrepreneurship in all curricula.

3. Commence embedding of sustainability, internationalisation, intercultural considerations and Indigenous understandings in all programs.

4. Identify expectations for collaborative and active learning and build into assignments and projects throughout curricula.

5. Build connections between undergraduate and postgraduate cohorts through systematic student- and alumni-led peer-assisted study programs such as PASS/PAL.

6. Scope and include informal, non-formal and extracurricular learning within Recognition of Prior Learning schedules.

7. Develop and test Learning Commons modelling to connect staff, students and partners with carefully curated, open resources and shared materials.

8. Implement formal pathways for learning, recognition, reward and professional development opportunities for all teaching staff, including sessional staff.

9. Commence the design and creation of Big Ideas units that connect knowledge across disciplines to replace People and Planet units.

10. Begin implementation of Innovation to Implementation technology and spaces roadmap.

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10. Begin implementation of Innovation to Implementation technology and spaces roadmap.
1. Embed a culture of enquiry and knowledge creation into teaching approaches, including research as an essential component of all coursework program design.

2. Create opportunities for targeted high school students and incentives for coursework students to engage with leading researchers, leading to higher degree research pathways.

3. Establish systematic student involvement in program development and review cycles with the formation of learning communities involving staff and students.

4. Produce an open policy on intellectual property that encourages sharing and innovation.

5. Commence embedding of Big Ideas units, and formally wind up People and Planet units.

6. Establish annual faculty Learning and Teaching events involving external partners (at least one event per faculty).

7. Commence implementation of the Innovation to Implementation roadmap.

8. Refine the implementation of blended learning towards a seamless integration of delivery modes (online and on campus) for maximum flexibility for all students.

9. Develop a range of short courses that can be offered to our community and corporate partners.

10. Develop and roll out professional learning and development opportunities or requirements for all academic staff.

Targets: From 2018 to 2020

1. Improved student learning experience based on:
   a. student experience survey data
      i. improved Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT)
      ii. improved retention/attrition trends
      iii. improved academic achievement
      iv. more engaged students as demonstrated through increased participation in program design, governance, and student groups and societies
   b. improved student recruitment measures
      i. better offer-to-conversion rates
      ii. recognition of distinctiveness (brand)
      iii. attracting students who achieve academic success at high school.

2. Improved graduate outcomes based on:
   a. employability metrics
      i. the Graduate Destination Survey (GDS)
      ii. the QS employability rating
      iii. other rankings
   b. number of internships
   c. number of intercultural or international experiences
   d. increased postgraduate and research degree participation
   e. increased alumni engagement (with a focus on entrepreneurship).

3. A culture of excellence demonstrated by:
   a. improved staff opportunities
      i. all programs engaged in new program review and redevelopment cycle by 2020
      ii. increased engagement in Learning and Teaching activities (eg grants, awards or events)
      iii. increased collaboration (internally and externally)
      iv. increased access to professional development resources
   b. increased partnerships
      i. industry
      ii. community
      iii. interdisciplinary.

Projected outcomes