

# LJMU LEARNING & TEACHING STRATEGY 2023-2030

## VISION

LJMU puts the needs of our diverse students at the heart of its endeavours. It recognises the importance of research, scholarship, partnership and collaboration for the optimal development of teaching, learning and assessment. The university will be recognised for exceptional academic practice that motivates and inspires staff, students and graduates to effect change at local, national and global levels.

## THE LJMU GRADUATE\*

At the end of their programme of study and wider university experience, the graduate should:

- Have knowledge and critical insight in their chosen field that is appropriate to their level of study, with an understanding of how environmental, economic, social, and political systems interconnect.
- Be information literate and able to derive insight from both qualitative and quantitative data.
- Be able to identify and employ available resources, guidance and support to meet personal and professional goals.
- Take an analytical and creative approach to problem solving.
- Value cultural diversity and be a responsible global citizen by recognising how the people and countries of the world are inter-connected and inter-dependent.
- Be digitally capable and responsible.
- Appreciate the importance of ethical decision-making, with the skills and understanding to make decisions based upon environmental and social sustainability.
- Communicate effectively, whether orally or in writing.
- Be self-motivated, confident, resilient and ambitious, with the skills and outlook to adapt in a rapidly changing world.
- Be able to work collaboratively, as well as independently.
- Be able to lead, motivate and support others to achieve common goals.
- Be inquisitive with a thirst for knowledge and appreciation of the value of lifelong learning.

\*These attributes align with the LJMU Vision and Values, the JISC report recommendations on digital capability and the LJMU Employability Skills & Mindset Framework.

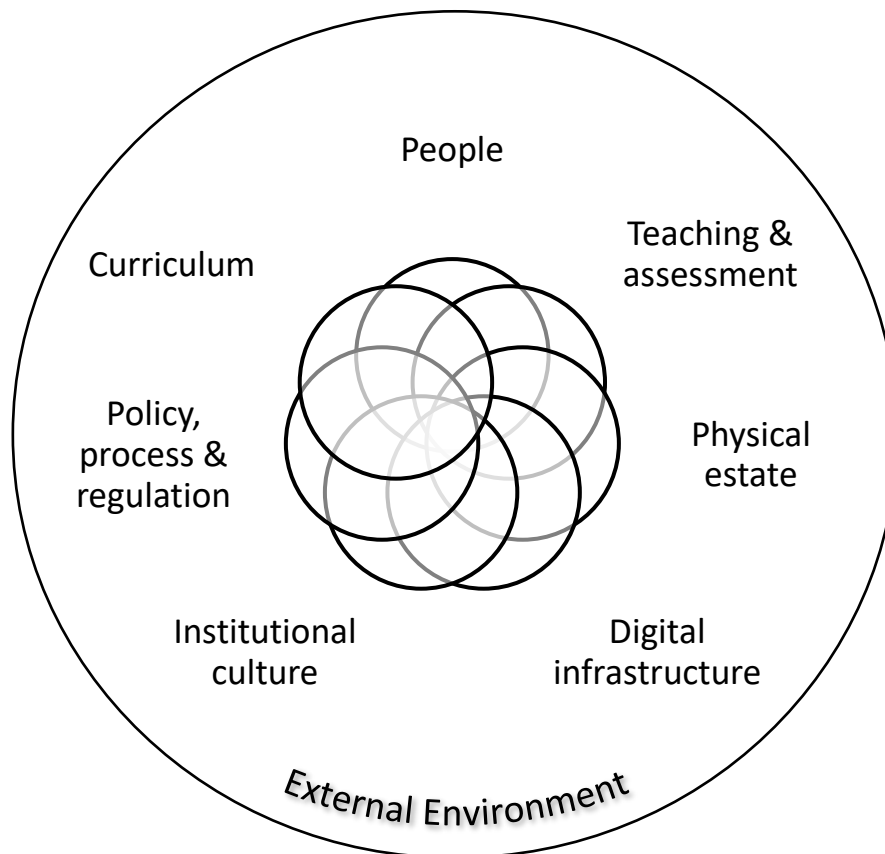
## ENABLING FACTORS

The LJMU Learning and Teaching Strategy identifies seven enabling factors that work together in a coordinated and student-centred manner to nurture the development of the LJMU graduate. These are:

1. people,
2. curriculum,
3. teaching & assessment,
4. the physical estate,
5. digital infrastructure
6. policy & regulations,
7. institutional culture.

## EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The strategy recognises that activities associated with these factors will be influenced by a range of external considerations. Notably, these relate to requirements of the Office for Students and, where applicable, Ofsted or relevant Professional Statutory & Regulatory Bodies. Given that policy developments in these areas are not always predictable, there is no explicit reference to initiatives such as the Teaching Excellence Framework or Access and Participation Plans. These will inform additional, specific plans and performance indicators rather than overarching strategic intentions.



This strategy builds on work undertaken in line with the 2017-22 Teaching and Learning Strategy. Key foci of this were that curricula should be research informed, inclusive and internationalised. In addition, there was a strong emphasis on employability and student: staff partnership. These have been embedded into key institutional policy and approaches such as the Academic Framework, Student Employability, Enterprise & Employment Strategy, the Curriculum Design Guide and Principles of Partnership.

This strategy acknowledges that work in these areas is ongoing and remains highly relevant. Hence, the strategic intentions outlined in this strategy focus on notable areas of development from the previous strategy. These will be delivered in the context of enhancement of existing work.

### **Cross-cutting themes**

There are five themes that encapsulate the most significant developments from the predecessor of this strategy.

These are:

- Inclusive curriculum
- Education for Sustainable development
- Digital education
- Education for wellbeing
- Employability

The strategic priorities outlined in this strategy focus on these themes.

## **PEOPLE**

The university recognises the centrally important role that all LJMU staff play a role in ensuring that students can realise their academic potential, professional goals and personal aspirations, whatever their background. Therefore, the University will continue to provide professional development and career pathways that foster excellence in teaching, as well as other activities associated with the student experience. In line with this, staff will be encouraged to pursue discipline-based or pedagogic research that will have a direct impact on the curriculum or academic practice. In addition, they will be encouraged and supported in the pursuit of qualifications and professional recognition linked to inclusive academic practice.

In recognition of the leading role of education to the University's mission, LJMU will reward and celebrate both staff and students' achievements related to learning, teaching and assessment.

## ***STRATEGIC PRIORITIES***

1. LJMU will actively seek to recruit students and staff from diverse educational, cultural, and social backgrounds.
2. In line with LJMU's commitment to The UN Sustainable Development goals, LJMU will support staff and students to contribute to the wellbeing of people, places, and the planet
3. The Institution will work to increase both student and staff awareness of equality and diversity, discrimination and unconscious bias, and encourage them to champion diversity proactively and with confidence.
4. The University will invest to enhance the digital skills and information literacy of staff and students.

## **CURRICULUM**

All LJMU programmes will continue to have an explicit foundation in a relevant and diverse range of contemporary theory and research. This will promote students' intellectual and personal development, both within and beyond their position in any disciplinary context. At a broader, social level, an LJMU education will encourage students to be good citizens by helping them to develop social and cultural awareness.

The university remains committed to providing inclusive learning opportunities for all students. It will facilitate a learning environment where all students feel represented, accepted and valued, and are supported to achieve the same positive outcomes.

## ***STRATEGIC PRIORITIES***

1. The University will support the efforts of staff and students, with appropriate input from relevant external stakeholders, to facilitate the co-production of curricula and ensure real world learning opportunities.
2. LJMU recognises that knowledge is historically contingent and will work to ensure that contributions of individuals from diverse backgrounds are reflected in curricula.
3. Students should have access to curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that will help them to acquire the knowledge, skills, mindset and real-world experiences they need to thrive in their future careers.
4. The University will support the development of programmes that help students to make ethical decisions based on understanding, insight and analysis of information and evidence.
5. Education for Sustainable Development will be a feature of all LJMU taught courses, so an LJMU education addresses social, environment and economic concerns to champion sustainability needs.
6. The institution will support well-managed induction and transition activities to facilitate students' understanding of their responsibilities and the expectations on them, as well as fostering their confidence and resilience as learners.
7. Curriculum planning will balance student workload and maximise flexibility and choice where appropriate.

## **TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT**

The University continues to set unambiguously high expectations on students, with approaches to teaching, learning and assessment that require them to develop and utilise progressively higher order thinking skills. Students will be inspired to develop transferable, as well as subject specific, skills as they become inquiring and confident learners. To support this, teaching staff will engage in a process of reflection and continuous development of their academic practice.

## ***STRATEGIC PRIORITIES***

1. Programme teams will be expected to utilise a range of assessment methods that support the application of skills and understanding to future areas of study, as well as explicitly addressing relevant learning outcomes.
2. The University will actively encourage academic practice that allows students to experiment and learn from mistakes in a safe and non-detrimental environment.
3. Programme teams will use a range of teaching and assessment methods to support diverse student needs and enhance the development of discipline-specific and transferable skills.
4. The University will provide opportunities for students to collaborate with staff and their peers in research, scholarship and enquiry.
5. The University will actively capitalise on the potential of in-person and online delivery to maximise students' engagement with their learning, as well as with their fellow students.
6. Programmes will reflect the importance of, research informed teaching, including integrating research generated in LJMU into the curriculum where appropriate.

## **PHYSICAL ESTATE**

The university recognises that the physical environment can promote a sense of place, purpose and pride that will reflect student identity and encourage a sense of belonging. It

also understands the importance of connective, social spaces and the public realm in enhancing the student experience and engaging with the wider community. In line with this, it will continue to invest in attractive, modern, accessible, technology-rich and sustainable learning environments that support active learning.

### ***STRATEGIC PRIORITIES***

1. The University will ensure the provision of a high standard of general and subject-specific teaching environments across the whole estate, complemented with high quality customer services
2. Teams will adopt a consistent approach to the organisation and management of learning on university premises.
3. Environmental sustainability will be addressed in the planning and operation of on-campus teaching.
4. LJMU will invest in flexible study areas and vibrant social spaces to encourage students to stay on campus before, between and after classes.
5. LJMU will support inclusive learning and teaching through the provision of an accessible campus.
6. Estate developments will support an institutional drive towards Active Blended Learning.

### **DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

The university recognises the importance of developing an innovative digital culture to support student learning and the wider student experience. At the heart of this is acknowledgement that the online environment offers more than access to learning materials and has a role in the development and maintenance of student identity. This will be supported through expenditure for both on and off campus technology, as well as ongoing investment in an exceptional virtual learning environment.

### ***STRATEGIC PRIORITIES***

1. The University will enrich the institutional digital culture through championing and supporting innovation in technology enhanced learning and assessment.
2. Accessible and ethically managed learner data will allow students to reflect on their learning journeys, as well as enable staff to provide targeted support and inform curriculum development.
3. Teams will adopt a consistent approach to the organisation and management of learning through the virtual learning environment.
4. LJMU will support inclusive practice through the acquisition and development of accessible and assistive technologies.
5. Ongoing investment in the VLE (Virtual Learning Environments) and associated technologies will support an institutional drive towards Active Blended Learning.
6. Staff and students will have access to state-of-the-art information technology to support learning and teaching
7. The University will ensure equitable access to technology services both on and off campus so that no student is disadvantaged.

### **POLICY, PROCESS AND REGULATIONS**

The institution is committed to processes, policies and regulations that recognise, anticipate and take proactive steps to challenge barriers to student learning. In support of this, the student learning experience will be underpinned with timely support. Institutional processes will facilitate ongoing reflection on the impact of practice on the student experience.

### ***STRATEGIC PRIORITIES***

1. The University will communicate regularly with students in a clear and accessible manner.
2. University online or campus-based systems and processes will be designed to help students transition into and through the various stages of their university experience.
3. Student support will address the impact of disadvantage on students' ability to progress and achieve the most from their university experience.
4. The University acknowledges the multi-dimensional nature of digital poverty and will invest in a range of measures to address inequalities in access and skills.
5. The University will provide accurate institutional data and learner analytics that are germane to student success but understood in the context of the holistic student experience.
6. The University's Academic Framework will facilitate equitable student success and progression
7. The institution will work to improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access and succeed in LJMU and be proactive in addressing any identifiable gaps in performance.

### **INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE**

LJMU vision and values place the student at the heart of the institution. It acknowledges the importance of addressing and supporting students' well-being as much as their academic development. Therefore, it will continue to promote kindness, respect, and compassion as a feature of all institutional engagement with students. This will facilitate a welcoming and supportive environment to encourage all students to recognise their worth in the learning environment. Central to this is recognition that a diverse student body is an asset to the institution and significantly enriches the learning community.

The institution recognises the importance of a robust evidence base for decision making and values research and teaching as mutually sustaining and reinforcing activities. Commitment to the quality of both is a defining feature of our culture. LJMU will also continue to afford parity of esteem between vocational and non-vocational programmes.

### ***STRATEGIC PRIORITIES***

1. The University will champion the development of meaningful learning experiences through collaboration between students, staff and, where appropriate, external stakeholders.
2. The institution recognises that equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is fundamental to excellence in learning and teaching and will act to embed EDI into all student-facing services.
3. The University will facilitate work across disciplinary and organisational boundaries.
4. The University provides opportunities for students to engage with each other outside the formal, timetabled curriculum.
5. The University will offer local volunteering, co-curricular and extracurricular activities that inspire confidence in students, facilitate skill development and broaden their horizons, as well as reflecting LJMU's commitment to place and partnership.

6. All staff will take be encouraged to take an active role in nurturing students' self-esteem and supporting their wellbeing.

## **OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK**

The success of the Strategy will be dependent on how it is delivered across the University. To support this, it is envisaged that operation of the strategy will be facilitated through:

- Thematic priority work streams – these will address those areas of the strategy that signal the most significant development of LJMU academic practice associated with the revised strategy.
  - Inclusive Curriculum – this will coordinate and develop from existing institutional efforts\* associated with inclusive practice to ensure that curricula reflect diverse perspectives and that all students can fully participate in their learning. \*These include, but are not limited to, Decolonising the Curriculum, accessibility, outreach and activities associated with the Access & Participation Plan
  - Education for Sustainable Development – this will bring together expertise and activity from across the University and beyond to establish approaches that can be embedded into curricular, extra-curricular and co-curricular activity to support sustainability commitments.
  - Education for wellbeing –this will establish processes and procedures that will enhance students' emotional, mental and physical health, as well as minimising the potentially negative impact of the curriculum on students.
  - Digital transformation framework – considering the emphasis on digital capacity, information literacy and active blended learning, there will be coordinated cross-institutional work associated with digital education, leadership, capacity building, wellbeing and infrastructure.
  - Employability – this will focus on improving graduate skills and outcomes through programme-specific and extra-curricular opportunities for skills development, work-based learning and supporting successful transition into post-study careers.
- Process/guidance review – approval of the strategy will necessitate a review of associated processes and guidance to reflect the new strategy.
- Teaching Quality Enhancement Scheme – this encourages the development of high-quality academic practice through staff development, CPD, accreditation, peer review, enhancement activities and recognition of excellence.
- Student Engagement – there is a strong emphasis on partnership working, collaboration and the student voice in this strategy. To ensure effective operation, it will sit alongside and be informed by an institutional Student Engagement Strategy (in development)
- Local Plans – these plans will outline how strategic objectives will be achieved at faculty or relevant professional service department level. It is envisaged that plans will be updated on a rolling basis, as and when required. Monitoring of progress will be overseen by Faculty Education Committees (or professional service equivalent) and reported annually to the Student Experience Committee.
- Key Performance Indicators - to support monitoring activity, appropriate indicators and targets will be set. These may be at institutional level or locally derived as appropriate. Indicators will also be informed by the expectations of external agencies if necessary. These indicators will be reviewed periodically and revised as necessary. As a result, they are not published with the strategy.