

## **Education Enhancement Strategy 2008/9 – 2011/12**

### **1. Vision for Education at Bournemouth University: unleashing the educational imagination**

Education is our top priority at BU. Our aim is to offer a high quality, transformational education experience that produces self-motivated, self-directed, lifelong learners who are employable in graduate level jobs in an ever-changing world.

Learning at BU is challenging, exciting and rewarding. It is an active, participatory experience, geared to the professions and informed by research. Learners at all levels are encouraged equally to fulfil their potential, with emphasis placed on developing appropriate academic and professional knowledge and skills for success. Technology-rich learning environments provide access to learning resources both on campus and world-wide. Education is delivered by academics who are experts in their subjects and themselves learning: from their research, business engagement and professional practice. They are supported by highly qualified professional staff who use their specialist knowledge to help learners get the most from the libraries, study environments and work opportunities. We recognise too that students learn from each other, and we develop processes and facilities to support and develop these peer learning communities.

In support of their learning journey, BU students can normally expect:

- The opportunity to control their learning and, in partnership with academics, professionals and practitioners, contribute to the development of knowledge and professional practice.
- 'Real world' work-related experiences that contribute to employability, including collaborative group projects, placements, field work, employer-led projects, case studies and simulations.
- A curriculum imbued with experiences that challenge existing perceptions and values and develop learners' capability to excel in a global environment.
- The opportunity to become a member of an academic community of enquiry that is offered as soon as a place on a programme has been confirmed and accepted, and that continues throughout the period of study and beyond.
- An inclusive first year study environment that includes access to peer assisted learning, tutoring, and the development of skills applied to scholarship, professional practice and employability.
- Assessment that is relevant and supports learning.
- Innovative technologies used to facilitate flexible access to resources on campus and world-wide and that link learning communities together, both within BU and externally.
- The provision of attractive, agile physical study spaces that enhance the learning experience.

- Recognition of personal development gained through activities outside the formal curriculum or within the community.
- An approach to developing learning that is grounded in education excellence and underpinned by scholarly, research-led pedagogies.

## **2. Implementation of the Education Enhancement Strategy**

The purpose of this Education Enhancement Strategy is to secure the achievement of our vision for education by determining appropriate actions at University and School levels. As a University strategy, it describes our high level objectives and targets, while the individual School Education Enhancement Strategies contain more detail at framework and pathway levels. In order to meet our aspirations for 2012, as expressed through the entitlements above, six education themes have been identified which will provide the underpinning rationale for a coherent approach to enhancement initiatives across all Schools and for the development of strategic corporate initiatives. These themes have been derived from the BU Strategic Plan 2007/8-2011/12, from Schools' Education Enhancement Strategies and through engaging in university-wide debate with academic and professional services colleagues. They are:

1. Curriculum Architecture
2. Role of the First Year in the student journey
3. Assessment and Feedback
4. Employability and Entrepreneurship
5. Internationalisation and Global Perspectives
6. Role of Learning Technologies

In order to ensure that the objectives of each enhancement theme are realised by 2012 an annual review is undertaken of the outcomes of Schools' framework monitoring, of BU's performance in national surveys such as the NSS and DLHE and of other information drawn from relevant data sources. Areas of strength and innovation identified through the reviews are highlighted, together with a synthesis of key areas needing attention. These are drawn together into an annual action plan that is discussed and approved each year by the Education Enhancement Committee. Staff development opportunities and enhancement activities to share best practice and recognise excellence are then put in place. This annual cycle of activities at School and University levels is designed to secure progress towards the achievement of targets set by the Strategic Plan for 2012, although it may not always be possible to link activity directly to outcomes associated with the Key Performance Indicators. Measures relevant to this Strategy under the Student Experience (KPI 1) are listed below.

This Strategy replaces the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2001/2-2008/9 and its appendices submitted to HEFCE, and it also incorporates the BU E-learning Strategy developed in 2006.

## **3. Themes for enhancement**

### **3.1 Curriculum Architecture**

The curriculum architecture defines the whole structure, style and delivery of frameworks. Each School has developed a curriculum plan to bring all its UG and PG programmes within frameworks and to move to units of 20 credit units or multiples thereof. These developments facilitate shared delivery and the creation of common units, which in turn reduce the number of taught units. The emphasis is on enhancing the quality of the student experience and achieving a reduction in teaching hours for academics. New subjects and innovative combinations of areas of study can then be introduced, based on research excellence and where appropriate, through sharing expertise between Schools.

#### **By 2012 -**

- Students are participating in common cross-university units that are appropriately contextualised to the pathways, learning with and from each other and interacting with the wider community.

- Flexible delivery of units is achieved through multiple assessment pathways and choices that are suited to the needs of different stakeholders: undergraduate and postgraduate students, professionals seeking continuing professional development, employers and staff.
- This curriculum flexibility optimises the opportunities offered through blending the use of physical and virtual learning and social spaces.

### **3.2 Role of the First Year in the student journey**

Students come with varied expectations of what it is like to study at university, and integration into the academic community and transition to becoming a self-directed learner beyond the first year of study represent significant challenges for many. The appointment of the Dean of Student Experience to facilitate effective integration of all aspects of the student journey has led to renewed consideration of the importance of the First Year in studies at BU and the need for holistic approaches to enhancing retention and progression. A number of excellent initiatives, such as PAL and Stepping Stones2HE, have already achieved international recognition outside BU. These and other schemes will be integrated into a coherent BU 'offering' to all new UG students that exemplifies the nature of our academic experience.

#### **By 2012 -**

- Opportunities for rapid enculturation and integration with the academic community of staff and students in the first year of study are provided, with particular attention paid to pre-enrolment engagement, transition to HE and meaningful induction.
- Peer learning is provided for all first year undergraduates.
- The importance of the first year is reflected in the higher allocation of resources at this level, including access to personalised tutoring that supports the development of the individual.
- In addition to the UG First Year, students entering at level H, together with postgraduate and research students, benefit from similar support mechanisms appropriate to their level.

### **3.3 Assessment and Feedback**

Assessment encompasses a range of rich and varied processes that both encourage and validate learning. Assessment can encourage learning and foster motivation by emphasising progress and achievement, so it is important that students are given formative feedback from an early stage, so that they can begin to gain an appreciation of expectations and standards in a way that cannot be achieved by statements of learning outcomes alone. This is facilitated if students and staff have a shared understanding of the language of assessment.

#### **By 2012 -**

- Innovative assessment methods are used as appropriate to the learning outcomes, but in such a way that the overall number of assessments does not increase and the overall workload for the student is balanced in terms of method and timing.
- Feedback on assessment is co-ordinated within pathways to aid the learning process and to develop reflective, self directed learners through an appropriate combination of self and peer assessment, feed-forward processes, face to face feedback with tutors and e-assessment.
- The organisation and management of assessment processes are streamlined and include e-submission and students gaining access to their marks online.

### **3.4 Employability and Entrepreneurship**

Employability encompasses knowledge, skills and personal attributes gained from the curriculum and from extra-curricula activities. In collaboration with the Graduate Employment Service, Schools are working to prioritise employability and to ensure close and proactive links with employers and relevant stakeholder organisations.

Entrepreneurship encourages students to develop their employability through knowledge of the mechanics of business. Entrepreneurial skills enable the student to capture an innovative idea and have the confidence in their ability to convert this idea into a business. This is crucial to their learning, their employability and the economy.

#### **By 2012 -**

- All programmes of learning include a progressive development of employability capabilities and attributes which are clearly articulated in Intended Learning Outcomes and associated appropriate assessment.
- All students experience some form of work experience during their programme of study. This is accompanied by opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and development gained from this experience to enhance their employability.
- Career Management learning is explicitly part of the students' learning experience.
- All students to have access to further learning opportunities in entrepreneurship, through the curriculum, extra-curricular workshops or externally supported activities.

### **3.5 Internationalisation and Global Perspectives**

We are committed to fostering a global outlook, an important element of which is a curriculum that is informed by international research and partnerships and that prepares students to become responsible, global citizens. In addition to drawing on their own international expertise, research and partnerships, Schools work with the Centre for Global Perspectives to embed internationalisation within the curriculum.

#### **By 2012 -**

- Cross-cultural awareness is a key feature of the student experience with the aim of developing mutual respect between home and international students and recognising the multiple realities experienced by students from different cultures studying at BU.
- The education experience includes exciting opportunities for students to study or work abroad, afforded by high quality international research and enterprise partnerships.
- Recognition that global citizenship begins locally and students participate fully in volunteering and local community outreach activities.

### **3.6 Role of Learning Technologies**

Increased flexibility of student learning has been the main aim of the significant investment that has taken place to strengthen and upgrade the IT infrastructure. The start of the academic year 2007 saw the completion of the process of adoption of a standard virtual learning environment, myBU, across all six Schools. The drive to make changes to the curriculum structures, along with the Releasing Potential initiative, has already led to the development of a range of innovative uses of its features and myBU is regarded as a core element that integrates education,

employability and international capability into our student experience. However, “E” is a challenge; it requires investment in time and the need to think about engaging students and staff in different ways.

**By 2012 -**

- Technologies are used effectively and inclusively to enhance and enrich interaction, collaboration and communication in support of learning, both on campus, in places of residence and in the workplace.
- Units are delivered through appropriate blends of e-learning and face-to-face interaction that maximise the potential of all virtual and physical university spaces and resources.
- BU-owned technologies, such as myBU, are appropriately aligned with Web 2.0 user-owned technologies to engage and motivate ‘digital native’ students to enhance the use of creativity and imagination in learning.
- All students have the skills and attributes to engage effectively with this technology-enriched learning environment.

**3. Developing and recognising education excellence**

BU staff delivering effective and innovative education deserve support and recognition. All new staff are welcomed to the University through the induction programme that introduces them to the organisation, its culture and values and covers all aspects of the academic role. The PG Certificate in Education Practice provides staff with the opportunity of gaining Associate Fellowship and Fellowship status with the Higher Education Academy and, for nursing and midwifery tutors, a recordable teaching qualification with the NMC. An extensive programme of CPD workshops ensures that staff remain current with education policies and innovative practice. Our future faculty, PhD students, are supported at the start of their academic career with a tailored induction programme that includes developing their teaching skills. Scholarship and research into the pedagogy of disciplines and professional practice are encouraged and supported, with an ongoing and lively interaction between University staff and the HEA and its Subject Centres. Innovative practice is disseminated through the University’s and Schools’ education staff development programmes and the annual Education Enhancement Conference. The BU Awards for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning recognise and reward staff who demonstrate how their education and learning support approaches have contributed to enhancing student learning over a sustained period.

**4. Key Performance Indicators**

**KPI 1: STUDENT EXPERIENCE BU Targets 2008/09 - 2001/12 (From Strategic Plan)**

<b>Key Performance Indicator</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>
1.1 Qualifications on enrolment (average UCAS tariff score)	277	285	293	300
1.2 Taught student completion rate (%)	78.5	80.0	82.0	84.0
1.2a PG Withdrawals Rate (%)	3.5			
1.2b UG Withdrawals Rate (%)	4.0			
1.3 Good honours degree (%)	56.4	56.4	56.4	56.4
1.4 Graduate employability in graduate jobs (%)	65	66	67	67
1.5 Subject areas with NSS score of 4 or more in each of the first four question areas	12/60	18/60	28/60	51/64

5. Sources of Data (*Illustrative*)

<b>Source</b>	<b>Owner</b>
CAG Curriculum Framework targets	Schools
Schools Synoptics: analysis of EE reports, SUE, etc	Schools
NSS	Registry
DLHE	Graduate Employment Service
Professional Bodies Reports	ADQ
International Students' Barometer	Centre for Global Perspectives
Freshers' Survey	ICR
myBU usage data	Academic Services; Schools
Professional Services surveys	Eg: Academic Services; IT Services

**Action Plan 2008/09** *(Under Construction)*

<b>Enhancement theme</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>KPI</b>
Curriculum Architecture			
First Year Experience			
Assessment			
Employability and Entrepreneurship			
Internationalisation and Global Perspectives			
Learning Technologies			