

College of Social Sciences, Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Strategy 2013-15: Summary

Our vision is “...to develop a community of scholars with a global mindset, sensitive to the multicultural learning and work environment, confident and competent in contributing to the socio-economic development of Scotland and beyond. To encourage amongst students an engagement in learning and research that endures and supports lifelong learning and an ongoing relationship with the University.”

There are 5 Schools in the College that deliver the taught undergraduate programmes for Social Science students. The College’s UG Learning and Teaching strategy is designed to support the Schools in their delivery of an excellent student experience and to realize the vision set out above.

Key priorities within the College strategy are:

<p>Enhancing the Learning Environment: Focusing here on recognizing and supporting staff, evaluating approaches to learning, teaching and assessment, encouraging research into L&T; using the NSS as a tool for reflection on how we deliver programmes and engage with students; and working with the advising teams and university services (eg Careers, SLS) to ensure suitable support.</p>	<p>Embedding E-Learning and E-Assessment: Engaging with the TELT community, integrating the work of the College E-learning staff effectively within School L&T committees and operational meetings, and working effectively with the learning technology unit to pilot new technologies.</p>	<p>International L&T Partnerships: create better systems and structures to manage study abroad, develop and implement a college mobility action plan, ensure effective transition for visiting students, outgoing students and direct entry (2nd year) students.</p>	<p>Supporting International Students: improve our understanding of student transitions to study at the University of Glasgow, explore the role of social media and student mentoring to support GIC students’ studies at the University of Glasgow.</p>
<p>Embedding Graduate Attributes: integrating GA into induction programmes, further embed subject-specific and level-specific reflection on GA into core teaching, promote a range of approaches (ePortfolios, Mahara, GA/ILO mapping), identify school-level GA champions to disseminate good practice.</p>	<p>Admissions & Programme Review: review provision in light of structural changes and student numbers, successfully implement new degrees (eg in Education), and create a college admissions forum to coordinate information at key points in the recruitment cycle.</p>	<p>Support School Directors of L&T and Quality Officers: disseminating good practice, creating space for discussion of new ideas, showcasing new and established approaches to learning, teaching and assessment from across the University, raising awareness of wider service provision for Schools and students, liaising with central teams involved in teaching space and MyCampus.</p>	

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College of Social Sciences

Undergraduate Learning & Teaching Strategy

2013-2015

1. Introduction

This document sets out the College of Social Science's priorities in relation to learning and teaching. It seeks to demonstrate how the College will support the 5 Schools in their attempts to meet the University's expectations for learning and teaching across their respective degree programmes. It considers some of the contextual influences on learning, teaching and assessment, sets out a College vision, and then identifies the strategic objectives that underpin the vision.

2. Strategy Context

The College of Social Sciences is one of 4 colleges within the University of Glasgow, and comprises 5 Schools:

- i) Adam Smith Business School (ASBS) – comprising Accounting, Economics and Management
- ii) Education
- iii) Interdisciplinary Studies (SIS)
- iv) Law
- v) Social and Political Sciences (SSPS) - comprising Central and East European Studies, Economic and Social History, Politics, Sociology, and Urban Studies. (The degree programme in Urban Studies is known as Public Policy).

These schools vary considerably in size, composition, student numbers and range of programmes. In recent years, the College has experienced significant growth in student numbers at post-graduate (PG) level, and has simultaneously seen growth in undergraduate numbers (UG) with the composition of the latter having changed in terms of the relative numbers of home, EU and international students.

The University of Glasgow has a number of strategic documents in which its vision, values and priorities for teaching and learning are clearly set out (see Appendix I) and that Colleges and Schools must address. Through the College Management structure, School strategies and priorities are established which allow the Colleges and Schools to meet the various priorities and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set by the University's Senior Management Group (SMG). These KPIs address all aspects of University activity, including learning and teaching. Associated workforce planning, investment and recruitment are proposed and approved, annual budgets are set and College and School funding and priorities are agreed through CMG.

The Schools are key strategic units in that they deliver teaching, are the main point of contact for students, and are the budget holders for staff and teaching income and expenditure, and it is the Schools and/or their individual subject areas where reviews of teaching quality sit, primarily through the Periodic Subject Review (PSR) process along with degree-specific accreditation.

2.2 Key Institutional and External Drivers

There are many factors influencing the provision of undergraduate programmes within the College of Social Sciences; too many to address here. However, some key considerations are as follows:

- The changing nature of students, their expectations and values; particularly in terms of the composition of international and EU students, and the growing number of entry routes into our degrees.
- The impact of the globalization agenda in higher education and opportunities for trans-national education.
- The changing economy and opportunities for graduate employment within the context of a global recession.
- The changing nature of technology and the opportunities it creates for changing learning, teaching and assessment.
- The Browne Report (2010) “Securing A Sustainable Future for Higher Education” which saw the introduction of tuition fees for many students in the UK.
- General trends in UG choices towards particular subjects, especially business-related subjects.
- The Donaldson Report (2010) “Teaching Scotland’s Future” that sets out to reshape initial teacher education and masters level teacher training.
- Changes to the Scottish school qualifications through the Curriculum for Excellence and proposed changes to the English school system.
- Scottish Funding Council initiatives (such as funded-places for home PGT students in targeted areas; increased widening access funded places).
- Increasingly competitive labour markets for academic jobs, alongside the research intensive nature of the Russell Group.
- National, international and University initiatives to recognize and reward excellence in learning and teaching.
- The strategic partnership between the University of Glasgow and Kaplan International College, that has established *Glasgow International College* and with that, certificate entry routes into several university degrees, including the MA Social Sciences.
- Strategic initiatives to create a range of entry routes into study at Glasgow such as 1+3, 2+2 and other international partnership programmes.
- The introduction of specific RUK, NSS, Student Barometer (SB) and other such teaching and learning related targets.

These influences on UG teaching provision are also shaped by the University’s response to other strategic considerations such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and the Knowledge Exchange and Impact agendas that relate to the REF and the wider objectives of the University. These influences present both competing and complementary demands upon staff time and open up both opportunities and challenges in relation to learning and teaching. These relate, for example, to our efforts to encourage research-led teaching and opportunities to inform practice and professions through teaching and research.

3. College Approach to Learning and Teaching

Building on the University's L&T mission, the CoSS L&T mission is:

“...to develop a community of scholars with a global mindset, sensitive to the multicultural learning and work environment, confident and competent in contributing to the socio-economic development of Scotland and beyond. To encourage amongst students an engagement in learning and research that endures and supports lifelong learning and an ongoing relationship with the University.”

As the key locus of teaching, learning, assessment, student interaction/community and research, the Schools are the primary means of realizing this mission. However, the College seeks to *add value* to and help shape those efforts, particularly in relation to the following three key University priorities:

- **The quality of the student experience**
- **Graduate attributes**
- **Internationalisation**

College committees and forums, along with some new initiatives proposed here, are designed to enable Schools to develop and review approaches to enhancing learning and teaching that in turn, meet the Schools' KPIs and strategic objectives and thus the College and University KPIs and objectives.

4. College Level Strategic Objectives

In order to support Schools in achieving their objectives and priorities, there are several key areas of activity in which the College seeks to add value. These are set out in 4.1-4.7 below and are designed to be undertaken in partnership with Schools and Subjects.

4.1 Enhancing the Learning Environment

To improve the quality and the consistency of the quality of the learning experience for all our students and for staff by:

- a) Enhancing areas of strength within the UG programmes within the College. Specifically:
 - i. Encouraging, recognizing and rewarding staff who embed innovative approaches to learning, teaching and assessment in the curriculum.
 - ii. Simultaneously recognizing and rewarding effective and established practice in learning, teaching and assessment.
 - iii. Evaluating approaches to learning, teaching and assessment and disseminating lessons learned and benefits accrued.

- iv. Supporting staff in the presentation of such developments at UoG, national and international conferences.
 - v. Submitting an increasing number of proposals to the University's LTDF and L&T Conference.
 - vi. Developing an in-house peer-review process for LTDF, HEA and other teaching and learning related applications to provide staff with 'critical friends' who can support the development of bids.
- b) Identifying and responding to trends in the results from the NSS, and ISB (now SB), consolidating and sharing best practice, and improving in areas where performance is identified as weaker;
- i. To aim for NSS scores of at least 80% in NSS questions 1-21 by 2015¹ and 90% or more in Q22 for all subject areas².
 - ii. Providing staff development workshops in partnership with the Learning and Teaching Centre's Academic Development Unit, that focus on areas of weakness highlighted in student feedback.
 - iii. Exploring and implementing forms of e-assessment that will support the quality and timeliness of assessment feedback.
 - iv. Implement and monitor the College NSS Action Plan each year, sharing School plans and reflecting on what works.
- c) Provide an integrated infrastructure for learning and teaching as well as student support, developing the CoSS advising system and working in close partnership with central services. In particular:
- i. Implement and review the new advising system for students; evaluating student and staff views of the system on an annual basis³.
 - ii. Provide high-quality student learning support both proactively and reactively:
 - a. Extend implementation of the first year writing skills course across the College's UG degrees.
 - b. Work with SLS to raise the profile of the student learning service provision amongst all student groups.
 - c. Proactively highlight the key role of NUMBER and SLS in providing resit exam support.
 - iii. Work with Careers to further expand the portfolio of employer links and opportunities to provide placements/work-related projects.
 - iv. Engage alumni and employers in the delivery of selected teaching and careers events.
 - v. Expand provision of mock interviews for UG and PG students prior to graduation.

¹ This is a stated objective of the University's Senior Management Group.

² There is some evidence to suggest that certain subjects rarely score highly in any institution; such evidence would need to be factored into reviews of individual subject area performance.

³ This review need not be in the form of surveys. Other forms of feedback and comment will be developed so as not to contribute to survey fatigue on the part of students or staff.

4.2 Embedding E-Learning and E-Assessment

- a) Work closely with School TELT⁴ community to identify, prioritise, implement and evaluate new technologies that enhance learning and teaching:
 - i. Pilot and evaluate new software, peer-to-peer technologies, e-assessment technologies and other such developments that have potential benefits to students and staff.
 - ii. Provide a structured and comprehensive approach to the Schools' move to Moodle 2 (commencing in the Summer of 2013 through to August 2014).
 - iii. Develop, in partnership with Schools, LTDF applications for projects that will support Schools in testing and embedding technologies.
- b) Develop an e-learning strategy for the College that provides a coherent approach to TELT within Social Sciences and identifies a series of objectives that reflect wider developments in E-Learning across the sector.
- c) Ensure that the newly appointed E-Learning Innovation Officer ⁵ is successfully integrated into the nascent team of web and learning technologists within Social Sciences (the others being Hooi Ling Eng and Suzy Houston).
- d) Liaise with IT services and others to enable appropriate technologies (eg, the installation of Echo 360).
- e) Ensure that lessons learned from pilots within and outwith Social Sciences are effectively shared through the College UG L&T Committee, the TELT forum and other such communities so as to allow the most effective and efficient implementation of TELT that we can.
- f) Develop web based information and support that is needed by students and staff, and in particular, that relates to activities such as student exchange and study abroad.
- g) Work with Schools and College, to recognize and enhance the academic and administrative staff e-learning capabilities across the College.
- h) Promote areas of excellence in e-learning within the College so as to encourage sharing of good practice.

4.3 International L&T Partnerships & Transnational Education (TNE)

- a) Develop a regular reporting system of partnership development activities for teaching-related activities in the College. This includes any form of partnership from student exchange to 1+3 or other form of degree arrangement.
- b) Work with the newly appointed Student Exchange and Study Abroad Coordinator (Prof John Finlay) to develop and implement a mobility action plan for the college and report on this at College L&T Committee meetings. In particular,

⁴ Technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching (TELT) contacts exist within each of the schools and liaise with the College and Learning Technology Unit in discussing the Schools' TELT needs and aspirations.

⁵ Appointed from 4th March 2013

- i. Increase the number of students participating in opportunities to do a semester or year of student exchange.
 - ii. Develop programmes that will attract study abroad students (in particular US students).
 - iii. Better coordinate across the College, information relating to exchanges, student experiences, and staff induction into subject mobility roles.
- c) Identify and develop, in partnership with Schools, appropriate support mechanisms for students entering degrees through alternative routes of study such as 2+2 routes or direct entry to year 2.
- d) Develop, in partnership with Schools, specific transition support arrangements for GIC students entering into year 2 of the MA degree.

4.4 Embedding Graduate Attributes

- a) Continue to embed Graduate Attributes within degree programme and course induction processes (eg. MA Social Sciences Induction; Accounting and Finance Employability Induction; BEd 1 PDP Lecture) and to highlight their value as a tool to structure student reflection on personal and professional development.
- b) Work with course and programme conveners to further embed subject- and level-specific reflection on Graduate Attributes into core teaching (eg. Active Citizenship Honours option in Public Policy; Sociology Dissertation training).
- c) Promote best practice materials to academic staff, Advisers of Studies and directly to students to increase engagement with reflection on Graduate Attributes (eg. Mahara Graduate Attributes ePortfolios; Graduate Attribute ILO mapping (Education; Business and Management); reflective placement journals/assignments (Public Policy)).
- d) Ensure Graduate Attributes remain a standing agenda item at all relevant SSLC and L&T meetings, and support student representatives to provide feedback on peer engagement with Graduate Attributes. Further embed reference to Graduate Attributes within relevant course evaluation processes.
- e) Ensure references to Graduate Attributes are embedded within all internally and externally provided academic skills, PDP and employability teaching within the College.
- f) Increase subject-level engagement with employers and alumni to increase opportunities for work-related learning and external endorsement of the value of Graduate Attributes.
- g) Identify School-level Graduate Attributes champions to disseminate best practice and establish a regular network for discussion and development of Graduate Attributes initiatives.

4.5 Supporting International Students

Whilst the College is fortunate to benefit from the specialist input of the College International Officer (Gayle Pringle Barnes), Gayle's work is primarily focused on PGT students. There is, however, a growing number of international students within our undergraduate degrees, the majority of whom enter our degrees

following a year of study at our partner institution, Glasgow International College (GIC). To support Schools in their provision for this cohort, and to support the students directly, the College will:

- a) Evaluate the ways in which GIC students' expectations of study at the University of Glasgow can be better managed;
- b) Explore whether, and how, greater use of social media can assist in raising awareness of key information prior to arrival at the University of Glasgow;
- c) Pilot approaches to mentoring between GIC and University of Glasgow students that may both better prepare the GIC students for their first year of study at Glasgow, and reduce the demands on staff time;
- d) Review what information is provided to GIC students, and at what point, prior to their arrival at the University of Glasgow, and what information deficits they have on arrival; and
- e) Dedicate two Senior Advisers of Study on the MA (Soc) degree to focus on the GIC students and to contribute to actions a-d above based on that insight.

4.6 Admissions & Programme Review

- a) To review our UG and PG provision in light of structural changes and student numbers so as to benefit from integration where appropriate, and to respond to student choice.
 - i. Review undergraduate provision within SPS during 2013-14 with a view to better integrating provision where appropriate across subjects yet maintaining subject identity.
 - ii. Redesign the BEd degree in light of the requirements of the Donaldson report, by Oct 2013 with the first year of the new programme offered from Sept 2014.
 - iii. Develop and implement course changes within SPS following the Nuffield Foundation funding for the Q-Step Centre.
- b) Work with Admissions, to review on an annual basis, our projected student numbers and profiles across the College, and in particular on the MA.
 - i. Create a college admissions forum that meets regularly to discuss widening participation numbers, direct entry to 2nd year numbers, amendments to entry tariffs, part-time student numbers and transfer policies. This forum will make recommendations to College Management Group where appropriate.
 - ii. Work with Education to model student numbers following the implementation of the new B.Ed degree structure.
 - iii. Evaluate the impact of MyCampus on students' choice of subjects not available at Higher (eg, CEES and ESH).
 - iv. Work with colleagues across the University to ensure that we are clear and consistent in the advice to students about admissions and that we communicate any changes to that advice in a coherent and timely manner.

4.7 Supporting School Directors of Learning & Teaching, Chief Advisers and School Quality Officers

- a) To maximize the potential of the College's UG L&T Committee by:
 - i. Disseminating University policy originating from the Senate Office, EdPSC and the University L&T Committee.
 - ii. Serving as a forum for consultation on developing policies and strategies at University and College level.
 - iii. Providing opportunities for dissemination of good practice by encouraging members, and inviting guests, to provide insight into School/Subject developments relating to learning and teaching.
 - iv. Encouraging discussion and debate at an early stage on courses of action that Schools / Subjects are thinking of taking.
 - v. Raising awareness amongst Schools of the services and resources available at College and Centrally for staff and students within the Schools.
- b) To enhance the effectiveness of the College Liaison Group (CLG) and increase its achievements in relation to the implementation of MyCampus by:
 - i. Restructuring the committee to ensure that key decision makers attend.
 - ii. Creating and empowering working groups to resolve issues in key processes.
 - iii. Reporting progress to the College L&T Committee and to the Chief Advisers more consistently.
 - iv. Engaging Heads of School Administration more directly in consultation and actions relating to CLG business.
 - v. Ensuring that key processes associated with recording issues such as grades received following student exchange, are fully implemented in support of the relevant (eg mobility) priorities within Schools and the College.
- c) Work closely with Estates and Buildings, Directors of Learning and Teaching and Heads of School Administrators, to improve the learning and teaching facilities and the processes associated with allocating that space.

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Appendix I: Key Strategy Documents

The College of Social Sciences (CoSS) Learning and Teaching Strategy has been developed in light of several key University documents, namely:

- The University Learning and Teaching Strategy 2011-2015
- The University Learning and Teaching Action Plan
- The University's Internationalisation Strategy
- The Student Engagement Strategy
- The Student Mobility Strategy
- The University Retention Strategy

These documents provide the context for the developments proposed in this strategy, and have framed the discussions amongst staff and students that underpin the CoSS approach to learning and teaching.