



Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy

This strategy complements the *Vision 2021: A world-class civic university* document. It focuses on the University's core academic function of learning and teaching and the wider student experience.

1. Background

As one of the UK's leading universities, Newcastle is the university of choice for approximately 20,000 students from more than 100 different countries. These students, from increasingly diverse backgrounds, are attracted by our extensive range of full and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate taught degree programmes, as well as our portfolio of Master's and Doctoral level research degrees.

The University regards a high quality student experience as an essential feature of excellent higher education. The 2009 National Student Survey (NSS) results demonstrate our ongoing commitment to, and effectiveness in, delivering a learning experience that meets the needs of our student community; 87 per cent of our students expressed overall satisfaction with their student experience, up from 81 per cent in 2006. Similarly, the results of the 2009 Postgraduate Research Experience survey indicate student satisfaction is higher than the sector average with particular strengths in supervisory support, access to facilities, and opportunities to develop research skills.

Our commitment, however, extends well beyond the student learning experience to embrace all aspects of a student's time at Newcastle. This wider student experience includes a sense of involvement in the life of the University within its local communities and globally, an attractive social and residential experience, active participation in cultural, sporting and work experiences, and a sense of wellbeing and support.

In recent years the University has significantly improved and invested in all aspects of the student experience. Notwithstanding our strengths in this area, we need to continue to respond to the evolving expectations of our students, the influence of advancements in knowledge and scholarship, and the needs of employers, in order to deliver an exceptional experience. Alongside responding to the changing expectations our student community (on value for money, contact hours and timetabling, better use of information technology), Newcastle continues to respond to external pressures and demands. These include:

- Greater competition between UK and overseas universities for students, particularly international students as more countries offer programmes in English
- Internationalisation, including the challenge of equipping students for global citizenship and the impact of an increasingly diverse student population on the community and pedagogy
- The burgeoning body of European legislation and initiatives on higher education, most notably the Bologna Framework
- An increasing trend towards diversification in patterns of delivery including part-time degrees, CPD, work-based and distance learning, professional doctorates
- The national steer for higher education to become more 'employer responsive' through developing the higher level skills of the workforce and enhancing graduate employability
- A challenging national discourse on academic quality and standards which is requiring the sector to review how it articulates and demonstrates the value of higher education

- The changing funding environment (HEFCE T funding, student fees, co-funding) and the restrictions on growth in student numbers
- The importance of demonstrating value for money.

2. Institutional objectives and strategy

Newcastle University's mission, as set out in *Vision 2021*, is 'to deliver teaching and facilitate learning of the highest quality' for undergraduates and taught and research postgraduates as part of a formative and enjoyable student experience. Our Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy sets out our aspirations to enrich students' experience of higher education, invest in the continuous professional development of staff in the many ways that they support learning, teaching and assessment, and improve the delivery of our wide ranging student services and infrastructure.

Our philosophy is underpinned by two principles, *education for life* and *parity of esteem for learning and teaching with research*. By education for life we mean providing all students with knowledge and skills that will last a lifetime, and providing knowledge relevant and useful to life and the world around them. By parity of esteem we mean learning and teaching and research are seen as being equally important and interconnected. Excellence in either is recognised, celebrated and rewarded.

The characteristics of the Newcastle student experience are therefore:

- Research-informed teaching
- Applied learning
- A fully-rounded student experience
- Continuous improvement.

Moreover, students are at the centre of the learning, teaching and wider experience, and their engagement lies at the heart of the University's future strategy. Students are regarded as partners in delivering the University's strategies, plans and innovation in relation to the student experience. In this context the institutional objectives, immediately relevant to the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience strategy, are therefore to achieve:

- Student satisfaction ratings of 90% or better in all subjects
- A focus on selected societal challenge themes.

The objectives underpinning the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy are outlined below, alongside the priorities for action for the period through until 2012 at which point the strategy will be refreshed. The objectives relate specifically to *delivering research-informed teaching and applied learning of the highest standard* and to *delivering a fully rounded, enjoyable and formative student experience*.

2.1 Delivering research-informed teaching and facilitating applied learning of the highest standard

Research-informed teaching and applied learning of the highest standard are at the heart of the student learning experience at Newcastle and are enriched by the institution's dynamic research environment and the research-intensive culture.

SO1. Deliver research-informed teaching and training in a professional, challenging and engaging way

The University provides education within a research-informed learning context, designing learning experiences that are shaped and delivered by staff working on leading-edge research and scholarship and professional practice.

The varied portfolio of taught and research programmes is founded on excellence while remaining responsive to changing contexts, locally, nationally and globally. The emphasis on institution-wide societal challenge themes (e.g. ageing, sustainability), which is explored further in our *Engagement Strategy*, is pivotal to the link between research and teaching. The links between learning and teaching and research and scholarship at Newcastle are therefore multi-faceted.

Internationalisation and transnational education are also integral to the Newcastle experience. Our *Strategic Framework for Internationalisation* sets out how Newcastle intends to embed internationalisation at home and abroad.

Specific priorities for action include:

- **Ensuring the learning experience is informed by our leading-edge research through:**
 - Ensuring that all our programmes are kept up-to-date, informed by current development in the disciplines and the institutional societal challenge themes
 - Identifying potential areas where research can become more embedded in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes
 - Supporting students to develop research skills within their programmes
 - Encouraging students to continue, where appropriate, into higher degrees and continuing professional development
 - Offering students the opportunity to undertake research, within research degrees but also through project work and dissertations in taught programmes
 - Ensuring that postgraduate students have opportunities to engage with the University's vibrant research environment, through seminars, conferences and workshops, and to engage in the co-production of knowledge with leading researchers
 - Fostering links between the University Teaching and Learning Committee and the University Research Committee
- **Reflecting the internationalised nature of the University in the learning experience through:**
 - Growing and strengthening the high quality international student base at home and abroad
 - Developing cultural awareness in students through implementing projects to support the internationalisation of the curriculum
 - Ensuring the integration of international students
 - Encouraging the use of different cultural viewpoints and examples within the curriculum
 - Providing opportunities for studying abroad and offering open access facilities to all students to learn a foreign language
 - Exploring and developing different types of transnational education
- **Embedding innovation and best practice in our learning and teaching through:**
 - Identifying programmes that are suitable for innovative and more flexible delivery methods
 - Ensuring that links are maintained with external bodies that have a remit for developing learning and teaching
 - Encouraging the development of ideas through the provision of funds for innovative projects that will benefit student learning

- Facilitating innovative ways of spreading best practice through support for academic units from QULLT and the further development of a central web-based resource of good practice
- Supporting staff to disseminate their good practice externally to have national and international impact
- Awarding greater recognition to pedagogical research
- **Embedding technology to support and enhance the student experience, including that of postgraduate research students, through:**
 - Supporting through staff development, funding and other resources the development and adoption of learning technologies as part of a blended learning experience
 - Rolling out and embedding existing e-learning technologies notably lecture capture, student response systems and e-portfolios
 - Exploring innovative methods of providing online assessment and feedback

SO2. Foster a culture of independent learning, critical thinking and enterprise

We are committed to supporting the development of research and inquiry skills which empower all students at every level of study to become creators and consumers of knowledge, and enable students to take greater responsibility for managing their own learning. In addition, we encourage students to be more enterprising in the way in which they apply their knowledge and skills.

A key enabler is our *Graduate Skills Framework*, which is being used to identify and articulate the skills and competencies students develop as part of the Newcastle experience. The framework will also be used to enhance curricular and extra-curricular opportunities for the development of graduate skills (see SO3).

Specific priorities for action include:

- **Enabling students to become increasingly autonomous learners through:**
 - Embedding academic skills development within programmes of study
 - Designing the learning experience so that students have to demonstrate increasing independence at each stage, helping them understand the value of independent study to later life and work
 - Developing and implementing services that support the acquisition of study skills
 - Providing Postgraduate Skills Development programmes for research students (see SO3)
- **Ensuring that assessment and feedback strategies support student learning/success through:**
 - Ensuring students receive high quality and timely feedback
 - Supporting student understanding of and effective use of feedback in order to feed forward into their learning
 - Encouraging the development and implementation of formative assessment and other assessment for learning
 - Developing tools to streamline assessment while maintaining robust processes, whether administrative or teaching
 - Providing models of good practice and training support

SO3. Deliver curricular and extra-curricular provision, which ensures graduates are well equipped for further training, research and workforce needs

As a civic university we contribute to the regional, national and international skills base, particularly through our high proportion of professionally accredited degree programmes, and through a portfolio of courses of continuing professional development. Within this we recognise and value the importance of growing our postgraduate student community. Training high-quality research students is vital not only to replenishing the academic base, but also to maintaining the flow of graduates to strengthen our regional, national, and global knowledge economy.

Multi-faceted engagement with employers (through industrial advisory boards, for example) supports programme design, development and delivery. It also ensures that our students benefit from applied learning.

Our *Employability Statement* provides more detail on this aspect.

Specific priorities for action include:

- **Implementing a sustainable institutional approach to the provision of postgraduate research training through:**
 - Devising and implementing a resourced strategy to support skills training for postgraduate research students in a post Roberts' environment
 - Maximising the synergies with the University's work on supporting the development of Principal Investigators and the implementation of the Research Concordat

- **Ensuring the University's programmes will continue to be valued by employers through:**
 - Embedding the Newcastle Graduate Skills Framework within new and existing programmes and identifying areas where the development of skills can be improved
 - Ensuring that existing and new degree programmes take account of employer needs and professional body expectations so that programmes are employer-informed not just research-informed
 - Working with employers to identify their workforce development needs, and designing responsive, flexible and tailored solutions (full programmes and short courses, part-time and work based) to meet those needs
 - Implementing the credit accumulation framework to support flexibly delivered provision that can lead to recognised University awards
 - Testing external perceptions of the value of programmes through, for example, employer advisory boards and forums, engagement with professional and sectoral bodies and the use of critical friends or alumni
 - Undertaking regular surveys of employers' perceptions of Newcastle graduates in order to inform ongoing improvement of the University's portfolio of programmes

SO4. Create opportunities for students' personal and professional development

Newcastle provides students with the opportunity to fulfil their potential and develop the attributes and skills that are necessary for learning, life and work in a global economy. Supporting the personal and professional development of all students as part of a culturally and internationally enriched experience is seen as key by the University.

The internationalisation of the student experience and developing the cultural awareness of students is addressed as priority for action under SO1. The development of students' skills is also supported through actions related to SO3, EO3 and EO4.

Specific priorities for action include:

- **Providing opportunities for students to reflect on, articulate and record their personal and professional development through:**
 - Rolling out ePortfolios to support the implementation of the Graduate Skills Framework
 - Delivering effective and consistent personal tutorial support
- **Ensuring programmes, services and activities help students to fulfil their aspirations through:**
 - Providing opportunities to enable students to reach their full potential and to access the support they require to help them achieve this
 - Embedding and refreshing skills frameworks applicable for all subjects
 - Promoting and funding activities that add value to the programme of study
 - Maintaining and strengthening links with employers in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to grow opportunities for student work experience, volunteering, etc.
 - Creating opportunities for students to have contact with entrepreneurs in order to develop business awareness and commercial acumen
 - Providing opportunities for students to volunteer or to undertake accredited career development modules as part of the curriculum
- **Providing students with access to appropriate advice and guidance through:**
 - Supporting staff to engage appropriately with their students (see EO1)
 - Clarifying the role of tutors to ensure provision of academic and pastoral support is available at academic unit level
 - Developing strong links between support services and academic tutors so that students are directed to the appropriate advice and guidance for all aspects of University life

SO5. Deliver all modules and programmes to agreed specifications

The setting of clear and realistic outcomes and the articulation of these to students, while ensuring that all modules and programmes are delivered to the agreed specifications is of paramount importance to the University. Delivering on these promises to students is critically important if they are to excel through access to high quality and challenging research-informed learning experiences. The first line of responsibility in this respect is located with our academic staff and academic units involved in programme delivery. In practice this means providing learning experiences which meet student expectations effectively within available resources. It also requires access to environments within which effective learning can take place (see EO5).

Specific priorities for action include:

- **Enabling students and other stakeholders to make informed choices through:**
 - Publishing high quality up-to-date information including specifications for programmes of study which are clearly stated

- **Ensuring that effective mechanisms are in place, through which the University can assure itself that the learning opportunities promised to students are delivered, through:**
 - Ensuring that robust quality information and mechanisms are in place to enable the University to have that assurance
 - Supporting a culture of continuous improvement within programmes of study (see SO1 and EO2)
 - Providing targeted support to academic units in addressing aspects of provision identified for improvement
 - Delivering interventions to improve student safety and security in an increasingly wide range of settings (overseas, work based, placements)

SO6. Ensure that our programmes meet relevant accreditation and quality standards

The University has a comprehensive, robust and integrated approach to the management of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. Embedded within our approach to quality management is a process of continuous review and improvement. This ensures that our programmes meet relevant professional accreditation and quality standards and that our policies, procedures and guidance relating to quality management are fit for purpose. In so doing, we satisfy requirements of public accountability.

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies are a driving force in many subject areas. In a number of cases they define the disciplinary framework and accredit our programmes.

Specific priorities for action include:

- **Safeguarding and maintaining the standards of our programmes through:**
 - Ensuring that quality management and assurance processes are consistently applied across the University and at all levels (institutional, faculty, academic units, programme)
 - Maintaining the accredited status of our professionally-recognised programmes
 - Managing closely the University's relationships with Research Councils to ensure that our doctoral education meets or exceeds their requirements
 - Monitoring submission and completion rates for doctoral research as key indicators of quality
 - Supporting ongoing critical self-evaluation of the institution's quality management framework
 - Ensuring that the external examiners' process and the mechanisms for responding to reports continue to be robust and effective
- **Ensuring programmes meet the needs of and are accessible to national and international markets through:**
 - Creating a climate and developing processes that encourage rapid and quality-assured development of programmes from idea to market and delivery
 - Expanding the portfolio of flexible and remotely-delivered programmes
 - Focussing on the development of demand rather than supply-led postgraduate taught programmes
 - Developing and sustaining quality-assured joint ventures and collaborations between the University and other partners

SO7. Conduct an active programme of raising aspirations and widening participation

Widening participation is a fundamental part of the University's global position as well as its role as a civic university with a commitment to its region and a strong culture of engagement. A key part of our corporate social responsibility, widening participation is closely aligned with our core values and principles, and contributes to diversity and quality in our learning community.

Our *Widening Participation Strategic Assessment* (June 2009) provides more detail on how we work to raise aspirations and awareness and support progression into higher education and our *Engagement Strategy* also addresses our role in raising aspirations within the region.

Specific priorities for action include:

- **Supporting transition into and progress through the HE learning experience through:**
 - Raising awareness amongst staff of students' prior academic pathways and contexts
 - Preparing students for higher education through the PARTNERS programme, Assessed Summer Schools and other widening participation and transition activities
 - Supporting all progression pathways into Higher Education at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels
 - Ensuring we have robust and appropriate forms of induction for all students
 - Undertaking specific follow-up activities with entrants from under-represented groups, in order to identify support needs and promote retention.

2.2 Delivering a fully rounded, enjoyable and formative student experience

Alongside high quality, research-informed learning experiences, Newcastle's students benefit from a fully rounded, enjoyable and formative experience that enables them to excel. (Enabling objectives EO1-EO6 below)

EO1. Enabling an engaged and participative student community and ensuring that the student voice is at the heart of our strategy

Students are at the centre of the learning, teaching and wider experience, and their participation and engagement lies at the heart of our future strategy. Our students are therefore encouraged to be active educational citizens and are seen as partners in the delivery of the University's strategies, plans and innovation.

Furthermore, the student voice is used to shape the way the University develops the student experience.

Specific priorities for action include:

- **Strengthening the mechanisms for student representation and evaluation at an institutional, faculty, academic unit and service level through:**
 - Ensuring that there are appropriate mechanisms for the flow of information and feedback between students and staff, e.g. including students in working groups and committees related to learning and teaching and the student experience
 - Reviewing feedback processes and exploring new forms of eliciting feedback to ensure a two-way flow of information between students and staff
 - Continuing to gather student opinion internally and use the results to inform policy and practice

- Encouraging students to engage fully in providing feedback on academic programmes and support services
- Using the results of internal and external surveys of student opinion to inform developments in learning, teaching and the wider student experience
- Embedding the University's Student Representation policy
- **Moving towards more fully supporting the diverse learning needs of all students through:**
 - Realising a learning community of tolerance and mutual understanding
 - Supporting the transition of students through the various stages of their learning experience
 - Providing effective support for the development of skills, such as information literacy and writing skills, to enable students with diverse learning needs to achieve academically
 - Ensuring that disabled students are supported to fulfil their potential
 - Fostering an internationalised culture throughout academic programmes and services
 - Providing effective support to international students to enable them to excel at Newcastle
- **Recognising the importance of interactions between staff and students in supporting academic achievement through:**
 - Refreshing the Student Charter as a means to set out and promote the highest quality of student experience at Newcastle
 - Encouraging students and staff to be fully aware of their own roles and responsibilities
 - Supporting staff to adopt a range of methods for student engagement in order to optimise student achievement and students' sense of belonging to the University community

EO2. Enabling staff to excel in delivering high quality research-informed teaching and supporting a fully rounded student experience

As a research-intensive institution, we are committed to providing high quality research-informed teaching and supporting a fully rounded student experience. Increasing the recognition of the initial training and professionalism of higher education teaching and support at Newcastle has already had a positive impact on the student experience and levels of satisfaction. Moreover, the institution supports its commitment to improving the student experience through the continuous professional development of our staff and the recognition that is given to excellence.

The University already has well-established frameworks linked to its Human Resources strategy for enabling staff to excel through PDR, workload models and time for development. Staff development is supported internally by SDU and QuILT.

Specific priorities for action include:

- **Supporting the continuous professional development of the University's staff through:**
 - Providing opportunities for staff to develop their knowledge and skills in supporting learning and teaching and supervising research
 - Developing and implementing appropriate levels and types of development opportunities for occasional staff and staff more advanced in their careers
 - Encouraging staff to explore the links between learning and teaching and research

- Ensuring good practice is shared between practitioners, and is recognised, disseminated and embedded through a range of informal and formal mechanisms
 - Encouraging and funding engagement with national agencies and programmes that promote teaching, learning and supervision
 - Providing the opportunity for academic staff and professional support staff to work together to add value to the learner experience
 - Recognising the support provided to the student learning experience by professional support staff and ensuring that their training and development needs are addressed effectively
- **Ensuring teaching and teaching-related activities are valued and excellence is rewarded through:**
 - Ensuring that excellence in teaching and research student supervision is widely publicised and demonstrably understood to be a valid promotion criterion
 - Awarding funds for innovative projects
 - Supporting staff to attain National Teaching Fellowships and other national and internationally recognised awards
 - Recognising the value of pedagogical research by staff and supporting their attendance at relevant conferences and for research leave
 - Encouraging staff to work as external examiners to broaden their understanding of other methods of teaching and assessment
 - Embedding further the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching into recruitment, promotions and development opportunities
 - Extending MyImpact (or equivalent) to encompass achievement in learning, teaching, teaching-related activities and research supervision
 - Raising the profile of teaching and research supervision in the University's internal and external communications

EO3. Enabling active student involvement in a wide range of social, cultural, sporting and community activities

The University is committed to promoting the core message of 'a degree alone is not enough' and ensuring students have the opportunity to participate in a rich and varied experience. By this we mean the range of activities, including student societies, is vibrant and thriving, and active involvement in social, cultural, sporting and community activities is promoted and supported.

Our commitment to engagement with civil society is articulated more fully in our *Engagement Strategy*. The well established ncl⁺ concept and programme is a key enabler in encouraging and facilitating active participation.

Specific priorities for action include:

- **Promoting and supporting the active involvement of students in social, cultural, sporting and community activities through:**
 - Making certain the University and Union Society work together to promote and further enhance the opportunities available
 - Enhancing the ncl⁺ programme to include, for example, a greater international dimension
 - Increasing student participation in social, cultural, sporting and community activities through growing the opportunities and drawing students' attention to the benefits of being involved via targeted publicity campaigns

- Recognising student involvement and achievement in social, cultural, sporting and community activities through academic credit and other formal and informal mechanisms.

EO4. Enabling students to access support for, and experiences of, work and enterprise to help them meet their needs and shape their futures

At Newcastle students are encouraged and supported in building the bridge between learning and work and enterprise through access to an exciting range of developmental opportunities inside and outside of the curriculum, and services supporting the transition into employment or business start-up. The University's academic units and professional support services enable students to access the information, advice and guidance and experiences they need for their personal and professional career development – in research, in enterprise and entrepreneurship, in employment – including well founded diverse careers advice and guidance which is truly international in its scope.

Specific priorities for action include:

- **Growing the opportunities for students to gain work and business experience through:**
 - Strengthening employer liaison work
 - Using Alumni to facilitate placements
 - Developing an institutional policy on the University's own approach to the provision of quality work experience and casual work opportunities for students
 - Offering students opportunities for training, mentoring and advice from entrepreneurs to support development of business and commercial acumen
- **Drawing attention to North East England as a place to live and work after graduation through:**
 - Introducing students to the region via the provision of opportunities for work experience and high quality careers information, advice and guidance and
 - Increasing the number of regional graduate employers interacting with the University and offering work experience and graduate jobs (see also our *Engagement Strategy*)

EO5. Providing access to environments within which effective learning can take place

Providing environments within which effective learning can take place is a priority for the University. On campus a major programme of investment in buildings and upgrading facilities, designed to address the challenges faced by many institutions of a legacy estate and changing teaching methods, is being implemented. As the University adopts more flexible modes of delivery to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student community and expands its transnational education activity, new demands are being placed on the institution to ensure a 24/7 service with improved access.

Specific priorities for action include:

- **Providing easy access to high quality learning resources and fit for purpose learning spaces through:**
 - Reviewing systematically the full range of spaces for learning and teaching, including social and learning spaces and laboratories, with a view to offering creative and flexible learning environments and identifying priorities for potential investment

- Committing adequate funds to refurbishment and development of the campuses in line with the University's commitment to the environment and sustainable development
 - Improving the range and relevance of collections of core learning materials
 - Migrating to electronic access for high-demand learning resources
 - Enhancing technology-enabled learning with new tools for resource discovery and collaboration
 - Developing new social learning spaces
 - Developing support for information literacy, writing skills and numeracy
 - Improving physical and virtual access to learning support services and facilities
 - Improving PC clusters and providing more accessible wireless networks
- **Ensuring that staff and students are supported in making best use of the learning resources and learning spaces**
 - Providing appropriate development for staff in utilising the available learning resources and learning spaces (see SO1 and EO2)

EO6. Enhancing the health and wellbeing of a diverse student community

The University recognises diversity and meeting individual needs as a core value of the way in which it supports the student community. This means ensuring that disadvantage is not a barrier for students while learning and participating in student life at Newcastle. Given this, the University provides students with access to pastoral and academic support within the academic units and a network of professional support services when they need it.

Alongside providing access to environments for students to learn, we strive to provide an environment which meets the needs of a diverse student community and supports optimal student achievement.

Specific priorities for action include:

- **Maintaining student support facilities and services of the highest standard through:**
 - Continuing to develop more easily accessible and appropriate support mechanisms for all students whether they are campus-based or at a distance
 - Ensuring greater integration of the student support services and monitoring student satisfaction with these services
 - Encouraging and supporting student support services to attain nationally or internationally recognised accreditation for excellence
- **Ensuring that there is appropriate student accommodation to meet the diverse needs of the student community through:**
 - Extending the offer of accommodation beyond the current guarantee to include European and home postgraduate students
 - Securing 800 additional bed spaces
 - Investing a minimum of £2m annually in refurbishment and upgrading projects
- **Promoting healthy living to staff and students through:**
 - Providing and promoting healthy food choices in all catering outlets
 - Achieving and maintaining the Heart of Newcastle award
 - Implementing sensible drinking policies and other health promotion initiatives
 - Promoting opportunities for staff and students to engage in physical exercise

- **Providing a diversified and expanded range of interventions to students when their wellbeing is threatened through:**
 - Providing better and more accessible information on health-related matters
 - Developing and delivering preventative programmes, e.g. life skills workshops, self-help guides
 - Ensuring rapid and effective response to mental health crises
 - Ongoing enhancement to campuses in relation to student safety
 - Providing better induction for students in relation to personal safety and security
 - Providing financial support for students suffering hardship
 - Providing a generous bursary scheme to support UK students from lower-income backgrounds (as part of the University's Access Agreement with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA))

3. Institutional key performance indicators

The institution has set out its intent to achieve '*student satisfaction ratings of 90% or better in all subjects*'. Measuring progress towards this institutional objective and the objectives of the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience strategy will be made possible by utilising the following institutional key performance indicators.

- **Overall satisfaction in National Student Survey** (question 22) – student satisfaction ratings of 90% or better in all subjects
- **Percentage of our student body that is postgraduate** – target is 27% by 2015
- **UK graduate first destinations in graduate level jobs** as measured by the annual Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey – target to be in the top 15 institutions in The Times League Table

The strategy overview (see tables 1 and 2) shows how the additional Key Performance Indicators listed below will be used to monitor performance against the objectives. The additional KPIs are:

KPI1: Student satisfaction as measured by:

- *National Student Survey* – see above
- *Postgraduate Research Experience Survey* – target to achieve ratings equal or higher than both the Russell Group and the national mean for all questions
- *International Student Barometer* – target to retain a top decile position worldwide for overall international student satisfaction

KPI2: Student retention and academic achievement as measured by:

- HEFCE retention rate – target to achieve and maintain benchmark for Non Continuation (as presented in table 3 of Performance Indicators)
- HEFCE non-completion rate – target to achieve benchmark for Students neither receiving award nor transferred (as presented in table 5 of Performance Indicators)
- *PGR submissions* – aim to meet 60% submission rate (FT in 4 years and PT in 7 years) for all subject areas for all students
- *PGR completions* – aim to achieve completion rates above the national average in HEFCE data

KPI3: Graduate employability as measured by:

- *Destination of Leavers from Higher Education* survey – see above

- *Regional graduate utilisation* – aim to achieve 50% of UK graduates working in UK employment to be working in the North East

KPI4: Student diversity as measured by:

- *Percentage of postgraduate students* – see above
- *Lower socio-economic groups* – 2014 targets: At least 21% of young UK entrants and at least 30% of young North East entrants to be from NS-SEC 4-7 groups
- *Low Participation Neighbourhoods* – 2014 targets: Young UK entrants from low participation neighbourhoods to meet or exceed benchmarks each year; At least 22% of young North East entrants to be from low participation neighbourhoods
- *Disabled student allowance* – ongoing target: HESA performance indicator for intake of students in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance to meet the HESA benchmark
- *Black and minority ethnicity* – 2010 target: Percentage intake to increase from approximately 4.7% in 2003 to 6.00%; Percentage of entrants from the North East from BME backgrounds to increase from 5.98% in 2003 to 8%
- *State schools and colleges recruitment* – 2014 targets: At least 72% of young UK entrants and at least 90% of young North East entrants to be from state schools and colleges
- *Local participation* – 2014 target: Intake from North East to be at least 23% of annual UK undergraduate intake
- *International student recruitment* (applications and intake)

KPI5: Student participation and achievement in cultural, sporting and community based activities measured by:

- *Numbers of students involved in volunteering, students societies and the Athletics Union* – target to increase participation within recognised institutional schemes by 500 per year on year, using 2009/10 data as a baseline
- *British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) rankings* – target to retain and improve Newcastle's top ten position out of the 152 HE institutions

KPI6: External recognition as measured by external awards and quality marks achieved by academic units and support services.

Additionally, we will benchmark our performance against defined groups of national and regional comparator universities.

4. Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Overall responsibility for driving forward the implementation of the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience strategy is vested in the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) supported by the Deans of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies, Academic Registrar and the Head of the Quality in Learning & Teaching service.

The University Teaching and Learning Committee (UTLC) provides strategic oversight and works with the University's faculties and professional services to ensure a co-ordinated and effective implementation of the strategy. The Committee also has overall responsibility for matters relating to quality assurance and the monitoring of programmes.

The Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees, in supporting UTLC, determine, monitor and review the Faculty teaching and learning strategy. The Committees also advise and periodically report to the Faculty Executive Boards on matters pertaining to learning and teaching.

At a faculty level, the Graduate School Committees devise and oversee the implementation of the Graduate School policy to ensure the delivery of the highest quality postgraduate teaching and research supervision.

The University's core academic structures – the three faculties and the academic units therein – working together with a range of high quality, accessible and innovative professional support services therefore have a central role to play in creating, enhancing and sustaining a high quality student experience. Continuous improvement in delivery is therefore essential if we are to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student community and enhance the student experience.

5. Risk management

The University's *Strategic Risk Register* outlines the key institutional risks and controls that relate to the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience strategy.

SR3. **Failure to recognise and address student expectations and experience** – the consequences of which will be poor performance in NSS and League Tables, failure to attract students in sufficient numbers and of sufficient quality, and reputational damage

SR4. **Failure to maintain teaching quality and standards** – the consequences of which will be an adverse QAA institutional audit, external accreditations are withdrawn, reputational damage and increasing difficulty in attracting students

SR5. **Failure to achieve widening participation benchmarks and Access Agreement milestones** – the consequences of which will be reputational damage, and a loss of widening participation income and some threat to fee income

SR7. **Failure to gain institutional buy in to the societal challenge themes concept and apply the skills of the University to work that improves society** – the consequences of which will be loss of potential opportunities for partnership and reputational damage

SR8. **Failure to maintain effective relationships with key external stakeholders** – the consequences of which will be strained relationships with community stakeholders, and problems with joint working or approval processes

SR10. **Failure to develop significant international profile** – the consequences of which will be loss of international reputation which in turn leads to failure to recruit the very best academic staff and students

SR13. **Failure to recruit, develop, retain and reward staff of an appropriate calibre** – the consequences of which will be reduced performance levels in provision of learning and teaching and delivery of the student experience

SR14. **Failure to meet student recruitment targets (home and overseas)** – the consequences of which will be reduced income and the potential to fall out of contract range with HEFCE.

Further detail on risk management is available on request from the Head of QuILT, Ellie Clewlow (ellie.clewlow@ncl.ac.uk) .