



UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

EDUCATION STRATEGY

2023–2029









Our Mission

To help students and colleagues from different backgrounds fulfil their potential and contribute to a more sustainable, equitable and healthier society.

Our Values

Progressive

We look forwards, anticipate what's changing and embrace the new with energy and imagination.

Compassionate

We are thoughtful and sensitive, supportive and encouraging, making time to talk, especially when the pressure is on.

Responsible

Individually and collectively, we take responsibility for our actions, work to the highest ethical standards and help each other to do the right thing always.

OUR EDUCATION IS AUTHENTIC PERSONALISED AND PURPOSEFUL

OUR PRIORITIES

Wellbeing

Working and studying together at Westminster as a community of students and colleagues is a big part of our lives – doing so in an environment that places our wellbeing front and centre helps us to be safe and feel safe.

We care for the safety, health and wellbeing of those around us as well as ourselves. We believe that everyone has the right to feel fulfilled at work and study, connected to a community of colleagues and students who are passionate about making a positive impact on themselves, our workplaces, study spaces and those around us.



Inclusion

Westminster will be known as a place where everyone can bring their whole self to work or study and know they belong – our commitment to equality, equity, diversity and inclusion is at the core of how we engage with everyone.

All Westminster colleagues and students will be in a supportive and safe learning and working environment which is equitable, diverse and inclusive, is based on mutual respect and trust, and is a place where harassment and discrimination are not tolerated.



Sustainable Development

We take inspiration from the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in how we drive our actions, activities and governance across our university, in line with our progressive, responsible and compassionate values.

As a community, we bring together our collective energies to play our part in addressing the climate crisis and inequalities to enable a more sustainable and socially just world.

EDUCATION OBJECTIVE

We will offer personalised and authentic education, underpinned by an inclusive curriculum, to enable all our students, from all backgrounds, to engage in transformative learning and to succeed in their studies and professional lives.

We will focus on providing a learning environment and learning opportunities – through all of our courses and through additional opportunities – that support students to develop the skills and capabilities employers are looking for and to understand the professional and developmental pathways open to them as graduates.

We will address global, political, and social challenges through a relevant demand-led and forward-looking portfolio.

We will do this by offering authentic teaching, learning and assessment modes which immerse students in the wider world through applied projects, work-based learning and global opportunities.

We will adopt a strategic and university-wide approach to the design and review of our portfolio, engaging proactively with new and alternative approaches, taking account of external perspectives and drawing on student voice. We will invest in our people to enable all colleagues to plan and deliver exceptional learning experiences and support.

Students will be empowered by working in partnership with colleagues and fellow students to shape the Westminster experience. We will develop an integrated physical and digital environment that supports excellent practical, active and collaborative learning for all our students.

OUR EDUCATION STRATEGY

Our strategy identifies priorities for education at the University of Westminster. By `education' we mean the ways in which we help students to learn. This includes teaching; assessment and feedback; academic support; and the ways we develop, organise and support our courses. It also includes the extra-curricular opportunities that enhance students' educational experience at Westminster.

Our Core Principles

Our strategy is underpinned by three core principles:

- Our education is **inclusive**, accessible and challenging. We are committed to removing the barriers to success and contributing to social justice.
- The **wellbeing** of our students and colleagues is our priority and underpins our student and colleague support structures, curriculum design and learning environment development.
- We lead change. Taking inspiration from the UNESCO Education for **Sustainable Development** programme, we support our students to become changemakers who can tackle interconnected global challenges to people, planet and prosperity.



Our Strategic Aims

We aim to develop experiences and environments that enable students to develop Westminster's graduate attributes. These require students to be critical and creative thinkers; literate and effective communicators; entrepreneurial and global in outlook; community-engaged; socially, environmentally and ethically aware.

We will deliver this through high-quality education in which the fundamentals (of course design, teaching and assessment) are consistently assured. In addition, this Education Strategy commits to the development of learning pathways which offer all students:

1. Authentic learning

2. Personalised education

3. Transformative education

Taken together with our core principles we believe that these aims will enable a way of being which is distinctively Westminster and, if delivered consistently across every School in the University and on every course, will enable the achievement of the student outcomes and experience embodied in Being Westminster 2022-2029.



OUR EDUCATION STRATEGY

1. Authentic Learning

We understand authentic learning as episodes where learning is planned and structured with the intention of enabling students, and colleagues, to deploy their understanding and capabilities for the benefit of others. It also supports students in applying their skills and knowledge in the workplace. Authentic learning immerses students in meaningful and engaging activities and is experiential and discursive rather than didactic in nature. It is collaborative, may be inter-disciplinary, and is always focused on the construction of knowledge for wider benefit. Teachers scaffold experiences that engage all students and encourage them to achieve, and coach for success.

This will mean:

- Clear pathways that enable all students to develop capabilities for employability, the workplace, lifelong learning and their future role in communities.
- A learning environment and professional development that supports authentic and active learning (see ‘Strategic Enablers’ page)
- Experiential, active and discursive modes of delivery on all courses, including accessible, varied, authentic and inclusive means of assessment
- Engaging students in the construction of knowledge for wider benefit (for example in relation to the UN Sustainable Development Goals)
- Demolishing walls between disciplines and enabling creative co-delivery
- Proactive course development, evaluation and review to achieve this.

OUR EDUCATION STRATEGY



2. Transformative education

Our education is empowering. We build confidence, unpack the 'hidden rules' of academic life, and prepare learners meaningfully for their lives beyond education. We work in partnership with learners in order to share decision making and support co-creation, and we invite everyone to play a full role in the democratic life of our institution. We hope that by engaging in these activities, the outlook and experience of our learners will be transformed, and their potential unlocked. We celebrate and build upon the resources, strengths and capabilities of our learners. We recognise their resilience and creativity and also recognise the particular challenges they may face on their educational journeys.

This will mean:

- Working in partnership with our students to construct powerful knowledge and to decolonise the curriculum
- Empowering our students to play significant roles in our democratic structures and the world beyond
- Bringing together the worlds of research and education to build purposeful and dynamic learning communities
- Recognising and building upon the knowledge that students bring to the curriculum
- Utilising both the curriculum and the co-curricula realm to develop the confidence, capabilities and capital that our students require for success
- Working to eliminate outcome and experience gaps between different groups of students through our Access and Participation Plan.

3. Personalised learning

All students should experience a strong sense of belonging to learning communities at Westminster. The identities of individual students should be understood and respected, and they should feel that their voice matters, and their contribution is valued. This agency should be reflected in their ability to shape their own education journey, and to make choices that support their aspirations. Our curricular, course and support structures, including personal tutoring, will ensure that students are welcomed, included, and recognised from their very first day. Students should be welcomed on their own terms, be able to bring their authentic selves and never feel that they are simply 'another brick in the wall'.

This will mean:

- Personal Tutor support that recognises and responds to the needs of all students throughout the lifecycle
- Effective, joined-up academic and professional support systems that meet the needs of all students
- Students experience agency in their learning, selecting modules, topics and assessments that suit their interests and circumstances, and by playing an active part in the design and delivery of our curriculum
- The development of learning environments that are inclusive, welcoming and which positively embrace the diversity of our communities
- Staff and students develop cultural sensitivities that enable effective collaboration and individual and collective creativity and expression.

STRATEGIC ENABLERS

The following enablers will support the achievement of our strategic aims:

Our People

We will ensure that all colleagues take part in professional development that enables outstanding teaching, learning, assessment and support, as well as to ensure the 'basics' in quality teaching and assessment. We will ensure that colleagues are confident in the use of current and emerging technologies. We will enhance recognition and reward for expertise in these things.

Portfolio Development

Portfolio Development will actively respond to global, political, social and economic challenges, harnessing students' interests and passions through a curriculum devised with employer, industry and community engagement.

Our Physical and Digital Learning Spaces

Our Physical and Digital learning spaces and resources will facilitate active and authentic teaching, learning and assessment, bringing the external world in and enabling high quality work-based learning. Our integrated physical and digital approach will deliver excellent practical and collaborative learning for all our students.



Public and Community Engagement

Public and Community Engagement with students, professional stakeholders, and global communities. We will work alongside our professional, industry and partners, to ensure that our curriculum and learning environment contributes to authentic education and graduate success and enriches wellbeing in the workplace.

Partnership

Partnership with students as co-creators of learning enables the development of effective practices. We will listen to and act on student feedback. Partnership between the University, employers, other stakeholders and the community is at the core of an authentic education.

Research

Research is embedded in our educational offer. It will be part of the experience of all students from day one, in a shared journey of progressive and responsible discovery. Our researchers will share their research with those they teach. All students will learn elements of research processes and methodologies. Research into education will enrich our teaching and learning approaches.



MEASURING **SUCCESS**

By 2029 our progress will be evident through outstanding performance in established metrics of student continuation, completion and satisfaction for all groups of students, used in sector performance measurement systems.

This will mean:

- KPIs +2.5pp above benchmarks for:
  - Student Outcomes: continuation and completion (PGT and UG)
  - Student Experience: Teaching Quality, Assessment and Feedback, Academic Support, Student Voice (as measured by NSS and PTES)
- Accelerated progress towards the elimination of all student outcome and experience gaps.

In addition, we engage in research and evaluation which assesses the extent to which the experiences and outlooks of our students are transformed during their time at Westminster. We will foster a culture which ensures we can provide evidence for changes that we make to the experiences of our learners, and to the effectiveness of the education that we provide.

MAKING IT **HAPPEN**

Our progress towards these targets will be informed by robust evaluation. We will invest in the further development of a culture of evidence-informed continuous improvement, drawing on research and data analysis to monitor and evaluate the impact, reach and quality of education practice and interventions. The University's Access and Participation Plan (APP) will ensure that impactful interventions transform student outcomes and an agreed evaluation framework will be used for ongoing evaluation of these. In addition, we will draw on high quality management information and lead indicators, including effective use of learner analytics which will support colleague and student decision-making and choices. Our colleagues' and students' voices and expertise were instrumental in developing this strategic plan and will remain central to the realisation of our aims.

This education strategy will be operationalised through the development of workstreams with identified targets and timelines. The Education Workstream document will connect this strategy with others – for example the Strategic Framework for Employability; the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy; the Public and Community Engagement Strategy; the Research and Knowledge Exchange strategy; the Digital Strategy; the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy; the Global Engagement Strategy, and the Estates Roadmap. Education workstreams will inform College, School and Professional Services operational plans, so that action planning is strategically developed and targeted. This will enable focus on a manageable number of impactful enhancements.

First line scrutiny and accountability will be through reporting to Teaching Committee and its subcommittees (including College Teaching Committees) and University Portfolio Planning Committee.







westminster.ac.uk

A charity and a company limited by guarantee.
Registered office: 309 Regent Street, London W1B 2HW
Registration number: 977818
10964/10.26/CH

MIX
Paper | Supporting responsible forestry
FSC® C015185
www.fsc.org

Please recycle this document