

EDUCATION STRATEGY 2020—2023



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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Education Strategy is the realisation of the University's purpose, values and education objectives in Being Westminster 2018-2023. It is informed by the work outlined in other University strategies but could not have been created without the commitment and input from students and colleagues across the University, who contributed ideas and expertise and challenged assumptions. This is your strategy. Our thanks to you all.

Our University is made up of brilliant, diverse students and colleagues. Our broad subject mix, and our location in the heart of London, adds to the vitality and diversity. In every corner of our University there is something amazing going on, developed and driven forward by our colleagues, and by colleagues and students in partnership. We have much to be proud of.



And yet there is also much to do. We have significant awarding and employment gaps between different groups of students. Overall our National Student Survey outcomes are behind benchmarks and our last set of TEF metrics are in line with a Bronze award.

Improving our work (and therefore also these metrics) will be about two things: developing in a way which is distinctively Westminster; and ensuring that excellent core practices are consistently implemented across the University, so that they are experienced by every student on every course.

Dr Sal Jarvis
Deputy Vice Chancellor, Education



CONTEXT

The Education Strategy is designed to achieve the education aims of the University's Being Westminster Strategy 2018-2023:

OUR PURPOSE

We provide grounded, holistic education with wide horizons and opportunities so that people from every background can realise their true potential, contributing to a richer, happier society.

OUR VALUES

We are progressive, compassionate and responsible.

OUR MISSION

To help students from different backgrounds fulfil their potential.

EDUCATION OBJECTIVES

To be a leading, high performing and transformative learning organisation which excels in providing an exceptional student experience and exceeds sector benchmarks for student satisfaction; to continually review and improve our portfolio of courses, and to be a TEF Silver with over 70% of our students in subject areas of Silver or Gold.

EDUCATION STRATEGY 2020-2023

CORE PRINCIPLES

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 organise and support our courses.

Our strategy is underpinned by six core principles:

- Our education is inclusive, accessible and challenging. We are committed to removing the barriers to success and contributing to social justice.
- Our strength is our diversity and we welcome people from all backgrounds and all parts of the world.
- The wellbeing of our colleagues and students is our priority and underpins everything we do.
- We work through partnership: partnership between colleagues and students, and between the University, employers, other stakeholders and the community.
- We lead change. We support our students to become changemakers who can tackle global challenges.
- Our education is digitally enabled. We embrace technology enhanced learning.



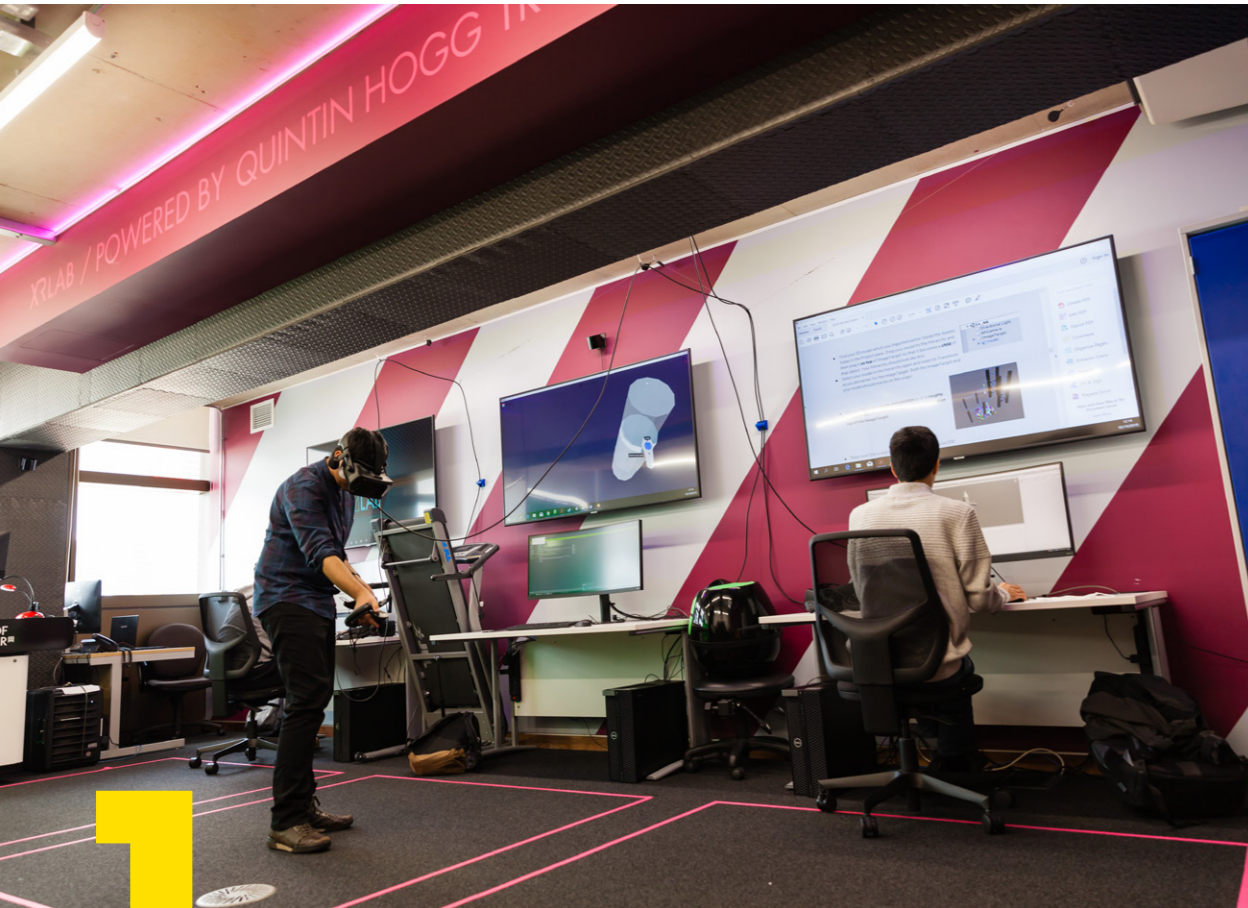
OUR STRATEGIC AIMS

Our goal is to enable students from every background to develop into resilient and expert graduates who respond flexibly and contribute positively in an unknown global future.

Working together, colleagues, students and governors in our university community have developed the following strategic aims:

1. Teach in a way that is, practical, active, inquiry/problem-focused and socially engaged.
2. Provide personalised learning and flexibility for students.
3. Embed critical thinking, employability, enterprise and global fluency in our courses and in co-curricular activities.

Taken together with our core education 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 2018-2023.



1 TEACH IN A WAY THAT IS PRACTICAL, ACTIVE, INQUIRY/ PROBLEM-FOCUSED AND SOCIALLY ENGAGED

This University has a proud heritage as the UK's first Polytechnic. Courses at Westminster have always been practical and focused on contemporary challenges.

Our students tell us they value engagement with practical tasks and debates. Our students and colleagues value education as tool for social justice.

Most of our learning and teaching activities will engage students through practical activities, inquiry and real-world problems that bring their disciplines alive for them and develop their own expertise.

This will mean:

- Practical and active modes of delivery on all courses.
- Actively engaging students in research through inquiry.
- Treating equality, diversity and inclusion as integral to education.
- Varied, authentic and inclusive means of assessment.
- Timely and pro-active course development, evaluation and review.
- Professional development for colleagues that is targeted and tailored.
- Classrooms configured to promote active learning.
- Specialised practical learning spaces
- Digital learning environment that enables active engagement.



2 PROVIDE PERSONALISED LEARNING AND FLEXIBILITY FOR STUDENTS

We welcome students from every background and from all over the world. Their talents, aspirations and needs are diverse.

We will support our students to become flexible, resilient, skilled graduates, and life-long learners, who succeed and contribute to society in ways they value. This will require us to offer coherent, flexible modes of study and support for all our students.



This will mean:

- An inclusive, accessible, decolonising and diversifying curriculum.
- Technology enabled classrooms and blended learning.
- Relationships developed through 'close learning' (tutorials and small groups)
- Informing our teaching using critical race pedagogy.
- Online or dual delivery for large lectures to build in choice of engagement.
- Coherent, flexible pathways for study, that support lifelong learning.
- Effective, joined-up academic and professional student support systems.
- Curriculum-embedded and extra-curricular opportunities that create rounded individuals.



ENABLERS

The following enablers will support the achievement of these strategic aims.

We will:

- Analyse University data to identify, and then act to address, inequalities.
- Embed partnership with students in all we do.
- Strengthen our external connections, in the UK and abroad.
- Create a research culture which enriches the experience of all students.
- Value teaching and engage, reward and develop teaching colleagues.
- Integrate our digital and physical estates to support flexible learning.
- Prioritise relevant resources to achieve our aims.
- Review and develop our portfolio of courses.
- Emphasise equality, diversity and inclusion as integral to education
- Be responsible, compassionate and progressive.

3 EMBED EMPLOYABILITY, ENTERPRISE AND GLOBAL FLUENCY IN OUR COURSES AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Our students will graduate into a rapidly changing future in which the careers and work patterns that we recognise now may no longer exist. The global challenges that will face our graduates are significant. Expertise and diversity of thinking is more needed now than ever, and our courses will equip our students to contribute to positive change in an unknown future.

This will mean:

- Employability skills, transferable skills and digital skills, embedded within modules.
- Work based learning on every course.
- Entrepreneurship and social enterprise activities on offer to all students.
- Short term outward mobility activities alongside traditional 'year abroad'.
- An internationalised and diversified curriculum on all courses.
- Extra-curricular activities to enhance employability and global awareness for all groups of students.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

We will have achieved our aims when:

- There are no significant awarding gaps between groups of students (indicative metrics: Access and Participation plan data).
- Our courses are popular and recruit well (indicative metrics: acceptance/offer rates; registration numbers).
- Our students complete their qualifications successfully (indicative metrics: continuation compared with TEF benchmarks)
- Academic colleagues are confident and expert Higher Education Teachers. (indicative metrics: HEA fellowship rates)
- Students' satisfaction with their education experience is high (indicative metrics: NSS and PTES outcomes compared with benchmarks).
- Our alumni are highly employable and in graduate jobs (indicative metrics: Graduate Outcomes data).

We will, additionally, use strategy, planning and performance data, including Student Module Evaluations (SMEs), and qualitative feedback to evaluate progress towards our goals. Colleague and student insights are important to us and we will draw on pedagogical research expertise, University colleague networks, CETI evaluations, UWSU research and feedback, alongside Students as Co-creators and Westminster Learning Communities projects to inform our view.



MAKING IT HAPPEN

This strategic plan will be operationalised through the development of specific workstreams with their own targets and timelines. Connectivity is important. Workstreams will connect this strategy with others – for example the Strategic Framework for Employability; the Research and Knowledge Exchange strategies; the Digital Strategy; the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy; the Global Engagement Strategy, and the Estates Roadmap.

Action planning will also be rationalised to bring together different planning processes – for example NSS action planning, APP planning, and annual course monitoring and evaluation. This will enable a focus on a manageable number of achievable and measurable actions.

Our colleagues' and students' voices and expertise were instrumental in developing this strategic plan and will remain central to the realisation of our aims.

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