



Leading education  
and social research  
Institute of Education  
University of London

# Learning and Teaching Strategy 2011-2014

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## Introduction

The IOE's mission to pursue excellence in education and the related areas of social science and professional practice is based on achieving the highest standards of academic rigour in all its work. The commitment of all its members to excellence in teaching and learning is about the experience of both students and teachers in the IOE, the national and international initiatives in teaching and learning to which IOE members contribute, and the development of first rate professional practice by its members within and beyond the confines of the IOE itself.

While the external context for learning and teaching during the period covered by this strategy will be challenging, the IOE will ensure that the student experience remains high quality and responsive to student needs. To reflect changes in the HE sector and the need for learning, teaching, student guidance and support to be delivered in a variety of ways, reflecting the increased flexibility in the way learning and teaching is accessed by students, the Student Charter will be redeveloped in collaboration with the Students' Union.

## Progress so far

The Learning and Teaching Strategy 2007-11 has underpinned very considerable development in and a major focus on the importance of learning and teaching as a key element of the IOE's work, and raised its standing and status for all members of the IOE. In that time we have seen very major achievements in learning and teaching, including

- staff being given recognition nationally by the Higher Education Academy as National Teaching Fellows;
- internal staff promotions giving significant credit to teaching successes;
- highly successful external audits and inspections;
- the celebration of learning and teaching through the introduction of an annual Learning and Teaching Conference
- a programme of regular lunchtime conversations focusing on contemporary debates in learning and teaching.
- initial steps in internationalising the curriculum and pedagogy of the IOE

The earlier strategy also supported the initial steps in moving forward technology in learning and teaching.

This new strategy aims to move this exceptional progress forwards, further marking and recognising the importance of learning and teaching at the IOE, and giving a focus to our work for the next three years.

## **The Future of Learning and Teaching at the Institute**

### **Forefront of the sector**

The IOE will continue to provide a stimulating educational learning community, attracting and supporting students from the UK and overseas, particularly those from non-traditional backgrounds. We will further internationalise the curriculum, developing and promoting programmes that support and enhance the diversity of the student body, whether as part of an online community, attending the London campus or completing bespoke IOE programmes developed through our national and international *networks*. In order to achieve this we will develop our methods of delivery to offer the IOE's renowned teaching beyond our local communities, exploiting and enhancing the application of technology, to provide flexible, accessible, progressive learning to a greater number of people. We will also work to embed issues of sustainability into the curriculum.

### **The curriculum**

Building on the recent review of the curriculum we will maintain the widest range of educational programmes, including professional short courses, unique in the UK, supported and enriched by research-led teaching. We will provide challenging contexts for the skilled practitioners who choose to study and further develop their professional expertise here at the IOE and develop new opportunities for staff and students to share expertise, in urban, national and international settings. We will be responsive to the external environment and create programmes and opportunities which engage with current social demands.

### **Supportive and integrated collaboration**

We shall continue to develop links with local and partner schools and colleges as the new context for initial teacher education emerges and consolidates, and also look

beyond the national horizons for engagement in new and innovative relationships, which further contribute to the IOE learning community. We will develop new relationships which address nationally recognised priorities for education.

We will exploit the additional opportunities for collaboration and innovation, in partnership with other members of the Bloomsbury Colleges, provided through the new ESRC Doctoral Training centre, which will be based at the IOE.

New projects will be identified where students and staff can work together, to develop mutually beneficial exchanges, with a view to increasing the trust and integration of all members of the IOE.

### **Support for staff**

We will develop new initiatives for all our staff to be rewarded for innovation in learning and teaching. We will continue to improve and develop the annual learning and teaching conference, a new forum for dissemination across the IOE which ensures that teaching and learning remain at the very cutting edge of academic, research and professional advancement. We will work with other IOE departments to provide training and professional development opportunities for staff which will allow them to take on the challenges of the future.

### **Support for students**

Our staff will support students in reaching their full potential academically and professionally through continued enhancement of human and physical resources. There will be Faculty-based learning and teaching champions who will move forward from the achievements to date, identifying and encouraging practice that is innovative, inspiring, inclusive, challenging, exciting and rigorous. We will work with our student body to maintain and enhance the quality of student learning opportunities, engaging with an increased range of professional and regulatory bodies.

We will continue to encourage all staff to share good practice in learning and teaching, both within programme teams and more widely in and across Faculties and through the annual Learning and Teaching Conference. All new staff with limited teaching experience will continue to be required to attend the IOE's Higher Education Academy accredited Teaching and Learning in Higher and Professional Education programme.

## How we will achieve this

### Internal Context

The IOE 's vision for its curriculum is that it shall at all times be excellent, distinctive, flexible, research-led, and grounded in a commitment to social justice. The revised curriculum will respond to the professional and personal demands of our students that it must be flexible, modular, and up-to-date.

The IOE's vision for its pedagogy is the enhancement of teaching and learning underpinned by both its theoretical research and by its research into teaching and learning in all phases of education. The IOE will continue to explore and develop approaches to e-learning and distance learning through the work of the London Knowledge Lab and the legacy of the IOE's Centre for Excellence in work-based and professional education, as well as the innovative work in specialist areas such as that of the London Science Centre which develops and delivers science CPD for London schools, the London Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training and the London Centre for Development Education. There will be an enhanced focus on providing opportunity for fully supported academic engagement wherever there is a demand. The IOE curriculum offer will be developed with the aim of attracting and supporting students new to higher education which will include the integration of IOE short courses into the wider accredited programme offer, providing opportunities for participants in focused CPD activity to enhance their experience by moving on to accredited activities.

Our student body will be invited formally to contribute through the existing fora for shared debate, will contribute informally by engagement with their own identified priorities and will collaborate on curriculum and other academic activities through existing and new lines of communication.

The work undertaken by Library staff supports all learning and teaching at the IOE through the increasing collections and services provided. In particular there are ongoing projects to improve the already extensive collection of international material, to extend the range of resources in digital form to support open mode delivery, to provide training in information skills for academic and professional staff as well as to develop the critical and ethical information literacy skills of students. The library provides a range of different spaces, suitable for both quiet individual study and group collaborative work. Feedback from students and staff, data on resource usage, and analysis of patterns of information searching are all used to inform and guide service developments.

### **Widening participation**

The IOE is committed to widening participation, and to work with a diverse student body. Together with the internationalisation of the curriculum, this is a clear enhancement of our provision. We will work to target students from all over the globe to contribute and participate to a vibrant and dynamic community of learning. We will build on the open mode foundations that have been developed to extend and improve quality, options and access for all.

The IOE is taking steps, through a number of initiatives, to extend opportunity to professionals who have never engaged with higher education. This includes the extension of our part-time undergraduate provision, new routes for entry to higher level study and a wider range of assessment options.

The Academic Writing Centre (formerly Centre for Academic and Professional Literacies (CAPLITS) is a specialist centre which provides academic writing development to all IOE students, whether international or UK-based. The Centre runs the successful pre-sessional programme for international students, and also offers a wide range of free small-group courses during the academic year which focus on aspects of academic communication such as criticality, giving presentations, using references, and organising essays. It also provides one-to-one support and advice on essays and dissertations, both face-to-face and for distance students. The Centre also works closely with several academic programmes to provide specialist student development tailored to individual programmes of study. The Centre's staff play an active role in IOE committees and working parties focused on international students and widening participation.

We actively encourage IOE first degree graduates to progress to higher level learning and encourage those taking short courses to progress to accredited modules and programmes at the appropriate level.

### **External context**

We will be monitoring and managing our Learning and Teaching Strategy with consideration for our external stakeholders, Government policy, including HEI specific legislation such as widening participation, student access and fees, and policies about teacher training. We will take account of external regulation, policies and guidance, including adherence to the statutory requirements of external bodies and the provisions of the Bologna Accord and other international influences

### Key objectives for the coming year/s

Working in the challenging external context facing HEIs and ITE providers, the IOE will maintain its leading role at the forefront of the sector in providing high quality teaching and learning for all its students. To this end we will:

- Recognise and reward excellent teaching, through a new internal teaching excellence award and support colleagues to apply for external recognition, ensure that student views form a significant part of the selection processes.
- Further develop and support e-learning, open mode and digital technologies, in order to provide a flexible learning environment, undertaking this where appropriate with other Bloomsbury colleges and developing new initiatives and relationships with national and international partners.
- Create an environment and opportunities for staff and students to work together on peer mediated research and teaching.
- Internationalise the curriculum, pedagogy and learning experience of students to ensure that all students, whether from home or abroad, benefit from the richness of the experience of learning in a truly international context.
- Ensure that the student experience is outstanding, providing an open and supportive environment which is free from discrimination and enables all to participate fully in Institute activities, with all students treated equitably.
- Provide first class progression routes and support for students making transitions to new levels of study.
- Develop our assessment practices to encourage innovation and variety, ensuring that students benefit from the wealth of knowledge and experience in this field at the IOE, while further developing the feedback we give students to assure a sound foundation for improvement.
- Ensure staff and students work together to provide a vibrant, dynamic environment that responds to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in fulfilment of the aims of this Learning and Teaching Strategy 2011-14, bidding for appropriate external funding to support learning and teaching initiatives across the IOE.
- Ensure regular monitoring and evaluation of the progress made in fulfilment of our aims for excellence in learning and teaching across the IOE.