LEARNING AND TEACHING PLAN

Contact: Professor Margot Kearns
PVC, Academic
INTRODUCTION

Since its foundation as Australia’s first Catholic University 25 years ago, The University of Notre Dame Australia (UNDA) has embedded excellence in academic endeavours as one of its key priorities. The University has been awarded a five-star rating for its teaching quality; for generic skills and for overall student satisfaction by the Good Universities Guide for each of the past eight years.

The University is distinctive in its provision of pastoral care to all students, and in its commitment to providing a culture and environment that is conducive to the development of the whole human person, including instilling an obligation in students to serve the common good.

The University seeks to provide an educational experience that is integrative and transformative and that encourages students to develop solidarity with people worldwide in the Christian spirit of service.

The Objects of the University

(a) the provision of university education within a context of Catholic faith and values; and

(b) the provision of an excellent standard of:

   (i) teaching, scholarship and research;

   (ii) training for the profession; and

   (iii) pastoral care for its students.

Graduate Outcomes

The University strives to ensure that graduates are recognised for attributes that go beyond excellent disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge. These attributes include qualities that enable them to connect with and serve the community through active participation, engagement and reflection. To support this, UNDA strives to enable students to graduate with the following attributes and abilities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generic Graduate Attributes</th>
<th>Graduate Abilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>The ability to communicate effectively in all domains within a range of contexts, using oracy, literacy, numeracy and information skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical and Reflective Thinking</td>
<td>The ability to be a reflective practitioner with sound decision making abilities, through the use of clear, critical and creative thinking and effective problem solving skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Competence &amp; Inter-disciplinarily</td>
<td>A comprehensive technical knowledge of a field of study, in addition to inter-professional knowledge extending beyond a single discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life-long Learning</td>
<td>Acceptance of personal responsibility for ongoing life-long learning and professional development, with a capacity to be self-directed and utilise effective time-management skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Responsibility</td>
<td>A capacity for high ethical standards both personally and professionally, underpinned by the ability to apply ethical thinking skills to social/societal problems and challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical and Religious Approaches to Life</td>
<td>The ability to be an open and reflective individual, sensitive to and accepting of others’ values and beliefs, whilst recognising and challenging prejudice and bias from a sound intellectual base.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Work</td>
<td>A capacity to contribute in a positive and collaborative manner in order to achieve common goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Information Retrieval Skills</td>
<td>The ability to construct new concepts or create new understanding through the process of research and inquiry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationalisation</td>
<td>A capacity for international and global perspectives based on an understanding and appreciation of social and cultural diversity and individual human rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to Active Citizenship</td>
<td>A commitment to connect with and serve the community through active participation, engagement and reflection.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About this Plan

The Learning and Teaching Plan 2014–2016 affirms and develops the strategic goals of the University — authentic Catholicity; excellence in academic endeavours; active community engagement; and responsible stewardship — as outlined in the University’s Strategic Plan. The four key objectives of the Plan are to:

1. Provide a distinctive and personalised student experience
2. Deliver quality academic programs aligned to the University’s Objects
3. Sustain and build excellence in teaching, supported by flexible approaches to educational delivery
4. Enhance meaningful engagement with the professions and industry.

Each of these objectives is supported by implementation strategies and performance measures. The Plan provides a blueprint to guide planning and implementation in each School. Progress against the Plan will be monitored annually by Academic Council.
OBJECTIVE 1: Provide a distinctive and personalised student experience

The priority of a Catholic university is to foster an appreciation of the Catholic intellectual tradition — beginning with an introduction to the liberal arts through provision of a Core Curriculum (philosophy, ethics, and theology) — and to promote student participation in volunteer and service learning activities.

The University is distinctive in its provision of pastoral care to students. Class sizes are small when compared to most other universities so students receive a more personalised education with ready access to teaching and support staff.

Strategies

1. Conduct formal biennial reviews of the Core Curriculum programs and implement changes as necessary to maintain high student satisfaction and relevance, and achievement of Core Curriculum objectives.
2. Identify and implement initiatives to further integrate and cross-reference the Core Curriculum across discipline-specific content in all courses.
3. Expand, promote and increase opportunities for student engagement and participation in volunteer and service learning activities, including through study abroad, leadership programs and ‘experience the world’ units.
4. Deliver appropriate and quality academic enabling pathway programs and ongoing academic support for all students.
5. Develop an institutional approach to identifying and supporting students at risk of not progressing academically, including identifying students at undergraduate commencement who may need additional academic support for success.
6. Coordinate resources to improve support for academic and social transition to the University community for commencing students.

Measures

1. Student satisfaction with Core Curriculum, as evidenced by Teaching Performance Evaluations (TPE)
2. Outcomes of biennial reviews of core curriculum
3. Number of students undertaking volunteer and service learning activities (including study abroad, leadership programs and Experience the World units)
4. First year student attrition and progression rates
5. Progress rates of undergraduate students who have undertaken an enabling pathway program (by year)
6. Proportion of students identified as needing academic support who then engage with support programs.
7. Student satisfaction with academic support programs
OBJECTIVE 2: Deliver quality academic programs aligned to the University’s Objects

The University aims to be known for its educational offerings that are recognised as benchmarks of excellence in their fields. Setting clear academic expectations and maintaining high standards across all courses in accordance with the Objects of the University will continue to be a priority.

Courses will be characterised by adaptive curriculum underpinned by transparent and rigorous quality assurance processes that uphold academic standards and support a culture of continuous improvement.

Strategies

1. Develop and monitor implementation of an institutional framework that supports the clarification, enhancement, upholding and maintenance of academic standards across all educational offerings.
2. Clarify and strengthen processes for the development, approval, monitoring, modification, review and discontinuance of courses to support a culture of continuous improvement and compliance with the Higher Education Standards Framework.
3. Ensure the University’s graduate attributes, as well as discipline-specific attributes and knowledge, are embedded in all coursework awards.
4. Promote and embed good practices in assessment and curriculum design; including embedding in all courses defined academic standards of student attainment and developing guidelines to facilitate peer review of curriculum and moderation of assessment practices.
5. Enhance data collection and analysis relating to the quality of courses for use in decision-making, benchmarking and improvement.
6. Develop and implement a mandatory online learning module for commencing undergraduate students to support student understanding of the importance of, and processes for, upholding academic integrity.

Measures

1. Proportion of courses involved in external peer review
2. Proportion of units involved in peer review of curriculum and moderation of assessment
3. Proportion of courses with outcomes benchmarked nationally and, where possible internationally
4. Proportion of courses that embed the University’s graduate attributes, as evidenced by curriculum mapping

5. Proportion of courses that are fully compliant with Course Accreditation Standards

6. Proportion of commencing undergraduate students who report that the online learning module has enhanced their understanding of the importance of upholding academic integrity and the avoidance of plagiarism.
OBJECTIVE 3: Sustain and build excellence in teaching, supported by flexible approaches to educational delivery

The University is committed to sustaining and strengthening high-quality teaching outcomes by nurturing a culture of excellence in teaching and learning and by identifying, developing, retaining and rewarding teaching staff who are committed to the Objects of the University. The University seeks to provide a learning environment that is personal and accessible, while inspiring intellectual excitement and academic excellence remains a priority.

The University seeks to provide student ready access to learning materials through blended learning delivery that incorporates eLearning portals to supplement face-to-face learning.

Strategies

1. Encourage and facilitate scholarly teaching and research-informed teaching practices by recruiting, promoting, and rewarding staff for these activities and implementing initiatives to disseminate examples of good practice in research-informed teaching.
2. Develop, resource and implement an institutional blended learning policy that supports building capacity and developing capability in blended learning, complements current delivery models, and enhances student access.
3. Provide flexible electronic and physical learning environments to support learner-focused pedagogical models and collaborative learning.
4. Further enhance the quality of teaching by reviewing, expanding and increasing targeted professional development opportunities and induction programs for academic staff, including those employed on a sessional basis; and by supporting staff to apply for internal and external teaching and learning awards.
5. Develop, resource and implement an institutional approach to peer review and observation of teaching.
6. Develop effective leadership capacity in teaching and learning across all disciplines, including through formalising an institutional mentoring and support program for early career academics.

Measures

1. Student satisfaction with teaching, as evidenced by TPE and Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) evaluations
2. Student satisfaction with learning environments, as evidenced by Unit Content Evaluations (UCE) and University Experience Surveys (UES)
3. Proportion of units in each course that involve blended modes of delivery, and the quality of them, as evidenced by UCE and UES
4. Number of staff in each school involved in peer review or peer observation of teaching

5. Proportion of academic staff in each school engaged in learning and teaching professional development opportunities, including the Graduate Certificate in University Teaching and the Graduate Certificate / Diploma / Masters of Health Professional Education

6. Number of staff applying for internal and external teaching and learning awards
OBJECTIVE 4: Enhance meaningful engagement with the professions and industry

The University strives to provide all students with meaningful and transferrable work integrated learning opportunities that combine theoretical and practical education relevant to the needs of students, employers and professional bodies. It is committed to working actively with professional bodies to seek their input, guidance and involvement in the development, review and teaching of all professional disciplines, and aims to be an institution of choice for employers in the provision of work-ready graduates.

Strategies

1. Develop and implement an institutional strategy to support a consistent and strengthened approach to the provision of Work Integrated Learning across all courses.
2. Expand industry and professional relationships to increase opportunities for student internships.
3. Strengthen the use and contribution of Advisory Boards to ensure consistent industry input to curriculum development and contextualisation of graduate attributes within curricula.
4. Review the University’s Graduate Attributes for currency and relevance.
5. Maintain professional accreditation, recognition or registration for all eligible courses.

Measures

1. Number of work integrated learning opportunities in each course
2. Proportion of eligible courses with professional accreditation, recognition or registration
3. Graduate employment rates as measured by Graduate Destination Survey and Good Universities Guide ratings
4. Student satisfaction with work integrated learning and other similar training for the profession opportunities, as evidenced by UES
5. Number of representatives from industry and the profession on School Advisory Boards