



University College
of Osteopathy

Academic Quality Framework 2017-2018

Section 3: Assurance &
Enhancement of Academic
Quality & Standards in Teaching
& Learning at the UCO

ACADEMIC QUALITY FRAMEWORK

SECTION 3: THE ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING AT THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHY

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of particular interest to academic staff, and of particular interest to Course Leaders and Heads of Area, and members of relevant UCO Committees.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	March 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Aug 2017 and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy	Vice Principal (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk					

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SECTION 3:

THE ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING AT THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHY

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3.1 RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ASSURANCE & ENHANCEMENT OF ACADEMIC QUALITY & STANDARDS

3.1.1 The University College of Osteopathy (UCO) takes responsibility for assuring and enhancing quality and academic standards, adhering to national frameworks, as well as aligning with procedures in place at its validating partners as appropriate. Within the UCO, overall responsibility for academic quality and standards rests with the Academic Council. The UCO's academic governance structures are designed to ensure that responsibilities for quality are clearly defined and owned throughout the UCO.

3.2 ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

3.2.1 The primary UCO committees with responsibility for academic quality are outlined below. Each has Terms of Reference¹, which determines the committee's remit, membership, frequency of meetings, quoracy and reporting lines which are diagrammatically represented within the UCO's Committee Structure diagram².

- a) **Academic Council:** The Academic Council (AC) is the main decision-making committee for all academic matters at the UCO (subject to approval by the Board of Directors). It is responsible for promoting, regulating and directing the academic work of the UCO, including teaching and research. It also oversees the UCO's academic management and all aspects of academic quality and standards associated with the UCO. The Academic Council is also the forum where the strategic academic development of the UCO is debated, critically reviewed and proposed to the Board for consideration and / or approval. The Academic Council is chaired by the Principal and includes members from a cross section of the institution, including academic management, Faculty Representatives (from full-time and part-time courses), the Students' Union, Student Representatives (from full-time and part-time courses) and External Representatives (normally one from a Higher Education Institution and one from another Health Care profession).
- b) **Quality Assurance Committee:** The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) is a sub-committee of the Academic Council and also communicates with the Senior Management Team (SMT) on institutional matters. It is responsible to the Academic Council for overseeing the implementation and development of the UCO's systems for setting, maintaining and monitoring academic standards and its quality assurance systems and procedures for taught provision at the UCO. It is responsible to the SMT for monitoring the effectiveness and the extent to which the UCO meets its institutional quality assurance obligations. The QAC also receives minutes from the Policy, Regulations and Audit Group (PRAG). The QAC is chaired by the Vice Principal (Education) and its membership includes academic management, faculty, Learning Resources and Corporate Services representatives.
- c) **Education Enhancement & Strategy Committee:** The Education Enhancement and Strategy Committee (EESC) is a sub-committee of the Academic Council and reports on initiatives for enhancing pedagogy at the UCO through defining and monitoring educational strategy. It directs educational activity based on external scanning and internal action planning to promote innovation and enhancement in teaching, learning and assessment. The EESC also has responsibility for the initial approval of new courses and curriculum development in general as proposed by and in liaison with Portfolio Boards. In addition, academic policy guidance and regulations are developed by the EESC. The EESC receives minutes from the Student-Staff Liaison Consultation Groups (SSLCGs) and Portfolio Boards (PBs). The EESC is chaired by the Vice Principal (Education) and its membership includes senior academic management staff and faculty, and representatives from various areas including research, student support and the student body.
- d) **Research and Scholarship Strategy Committee:** The Research and Scholarship Strategy Committee (RSSC) reports to the Academic Council and focuses on research and scholarship

activity and development across the UCO. The RSSC is responsible for the implementation of the Research and Scholarship Strategy. Embedded within this, the RSSC develops and considers the implementation of new areas of research, as well as enhancing scholarship amongst staff and students, and monitoring the research elements of the Professional Doctorate course.

- e) **Portfolio Boards:** Reporting to the EESC, the Portfolio Boards are responsible for overseeing the course provision at the relevant level of study (Foundation, Pre-registration and Postgraduate). The role of Portfolio Boards is to ensure coherence in education at the UCO. They maintain an overview of curriculum content, structure, organisation, assessment, learning resources and delivery of the teaching timetable. Reporting to the Board of Examiners, Portfolio Boards review interim (provisional) examination and coursework results and approve them for publication to students. In addition, Portfolio Boards peer-review and approve changes to courses and units and Annual Course Monitoring Reports as appropriate.
- f) **Course Teams:** Course Teams report to the relevant Portfolio Board regarding the day-to-day administration and management of each Course. Course Teams ensure that the validated curriculum is delivered and assessed in accordance with the relevant course information and unit information forms. Course Teams are chaired by Course Leaders and consist of Unit Leaders and a Student Representative.
- g) **Student-Staff Liaison Consultation Groups:** Student-Staff Liaison Consultation Groups (SSLCGs) report to the Education Enhancement and Strategy Committee (EESC). They serve as the forum for students to discuss with faculty and staff significant group issues connected to learning, teaching, student support, and UCO services and environment. They also provide an opportunity for staff to consult with students about institutional developments under consideration. They are co-chaired by the Student Experience Manager and Student Union President and consist of student representatives, Course Team members and senior academic staff. There is an SSLCG for both full- and part-time students including both undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- h) **Scrutiny Boards:** Scrutiny Boards are sub-committees of Course Teams. Scrutiny Boards are responsible for the receipt, consideration and modification of all examination material for the specified course, ensuring that: all assessment items are at the appropriate level; all appropriate learning outcomes are assessed for the year being considered; a high level of written English is maintained throughout all printed assessments; overlapping subject areas do not duplicate the content of questions unnecessarily; and that a diverse range of assessments is used and that assessment methods used are appropriate for the subject they are examining. Scrutiny Boards are chaired by the Academic Registrar and consist of the Course Leader relevant to the assessment under scrutiny, Heads of Area concerned relevant to the assessment under scrutiny, Unit Leaders relevant to the assessment under scrutiny, the Student Support Manager and appropriate Internal Examiners. All staff involved in the writing and development of assessment questions are also invited to Scrutiny Board meetings.
- i) **Student Attendance and Retention Group:** The Student Attendance and Retention Group (SARG) is a sub-committee of all Course Teams. Its purpose is to monitor student attendance and to notify the relevant support staff, Course Leaders, Unit Leaders and the Student Support Manager in cases of concern regarding a student's attendance. The SARG is chaired by the Academic Registrar and consists of Course Leaders, Heads of Areas and Student Support Manager. Other members of staff are invited to attend the SARG on an 'as required' basis.

3.3 STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES TO ACADEMIC QUALITY

a) THE VICE PRINCIPAL (EDUCATION)

- 3.3.1 The UCO's Vice Principal (Education) provides management of the entire academic portfolio and has overall responsibility for academic quality assurance and enhancement. The Vice

Principal (Education) is supported by a number of staff in respect of ensuring that the UCO's quality assurance procedures are undertaken effectively and in promoting the enhancement of quality. The Vice Principal (Education) chairs the Quality Assurance Committee and the Education Enhancement and Strategy Committee.

B) THE DEAN OF ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

3.3.2 The Dean of Academic Development oversees academic development and quality enhancement across the UCO's academic portfolio and reports to the Vice-Principal (Education) on these matters.

C) COURSE LEADERS, HEADS OF AREAS AND UNIT LEADERS

3.3.3 Course Leaders take responsibility for ensuring the effectiveness of the day to day quality of the course and for ensuring that operational delivery is being carried out effectively and efficiently by all academic staff. Course Leaders normally chair Course Team committees.

3.3.4 Heads of Areas are responsible for the curriculum development and management of common areas across pre-registration courses.

3.3.5 Unit Leaders take responsibility for the day to day management of a unit of a course and ensures that it is delivered and assessed in line with the validated course documentation.

3.3.6 The roles and responsibilities of Course Leaders, Heads of Areas and Unit Leaders are detailed in AQF Section 2: An Overview of Teaching & Learning at the British UCO of Osteopathy³.

c) THE ACADEMIC REGISTRAR AND ACADEMIC REGISTRY

3.3.7 The Academic Registrar has an overarching role covering both student and course administration. The Academic Registrar is also the Lead Secretary of the Academic Council.

3.3.8 The Academic Registry's main role is to act as the definitive record keeper about students and courses on behalf of the UCO. Its work underpins a student's academic experience from application through to graduation, including enrolment, assessment, timetabling, complaints, discipline, and transcript production on behalf of the UCO. The Academic Registry guides and supports the work of academic and administrative staff in a number of areas including regulations and student assessment.

d) THE QUALITY TEAM

3.3.9 The UCO's Quality Team is overseen by the Head of Quality and is responsible on an operational basis for ensuring that day-to-day management of, and compliance with, the quality assurance and enhancement of the Academic Council.

3.3.10 The Quality Team also manages the UCO's Quality Assurance processes including: course approvals, changes to courses and units, course and institutional reviews and annual monitoring.

3.4 UCO POLICY REGARDING ACADEMIC STANDARDS

a) OVERALL POLICY REGARDING ACADEMIC STANDARDS

3.4.1 The UCO's overall policy in regard to academic standards for undergraduate and postgraduate taught degrees is to ensure that the standards achieved by students completing a particular programme of study are comparable both within and between cohorts and with awards granted and conferred throughout the university sector in the United Kingdom, in compliance with the UCO's Academic Regulations⁴ and agreed schedules of variance to these Regulations.

- 3.4.2 Through taught course approval, course documents clarify full details of the learning and assessment structures of courses approved by the UCO. Students are referred to the appropriate course handbook or other course materials for fuller guidance and details on the learning and assessment structures of their course or programme of study.
- 3.4.3 Full details of the learning and assessment arrangements for Professional Doctorate in Osteopathy students are clarified through the University of Bedfordshire's Academic Regulations⁵.

b) THE DEFINITION OF, AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR, ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- 3.4.4 Academic Standards are made up of three primary elements:
- The composition of a course in terms of prescribed units and pass levels;
 - The aims and learning outcomes of courses;
 - The methods of awarding marks/grades which are based on assessment criteria, marking schemes and a Common Assessment Grading Scale to assure that effective means of verifying the standards of awards in terms of these elements are in place.
- 3.4.5 The definition of the academic standards of specific subject areas / units / courses of study and their associated awards is the responsibility of those with the experience and expertise in the subject / unit / course area. Several individuals or groups of individuals therefore share the responsibility for defining and maintaining academic standards relating to the design, delivery, assessment and review of subject areas and courses of study and include:
- Individual Tutors** who design the delivery and assessment and review their subject area, as appropriate;
 - Unit Leaders** who, as members of Course Teams, collectively design, deliver, assess and review units that comprise courses of study in consideration of the QAA Subject Benchmark Statements, as applicable;
 - Heads of Areas and Course Leaders**, who oversee unit and course design, stipulate the course curriculum and organise its delivery, identify resources required for successful delivery, and co-ordinate the review of courses of study;
 - Members of Academic Committees**, who are responsible for developing and enhancing existing courses of study, endorsing proposals for new courses, major changes to existing courses, the discontinuation of existing courses and approving new units, title changes, major changes to the curriculum, existing assessments and Course Information Forms for existing degree courses as recommended by the Education Enhancement and Strategy Committee (EESC).
 - Members of Academic Council**, who are responsible for maintaining academic standards and recommending the regular review of all courses in conjunction with, where applicable, the various examining, validating and accrediting bodies, for planning, co-ordinating, developing and overseeing the academic work of the UCO and associated activities, and monitoring and implementing student feedback and for advising on matters of resourcing necessary to support the work of the UCO;
 - Internal and External Panel Members** who approve new courses, re-validate existing courses, approve changes to units and courses and oversee and approve annual monitoring and periodic course review activities;
 - Internal and External Examiners, Moderators and Assessors**, who are responsible for setting and marking course assessments to a sufficient standard and determine the final marks/grades awarded to students

- 3.4.6 The quality and capability of staff who support these activities or who are responsible for these activities is fundamental in maintaining academic standards. The UCO ensures that the staff it employs are of a sufficient standard and character that enables them to carry out their designated responsibilities adequately⁶.
- 3.4.7 Staff recruitment and development procedures are discussed more fully in AQF Section 13: Staff Recruitment & Development.
- 3.4.8 There is also corporate responsibility for academic standards and their continuing review. It is important for an institution to establish rigorous mechanisms to ensure that the levels of academic and personal support and the teaching and learning environment are appropriate to enable students to fulfil their potential and achieve the highest level of award as possible.

c) THE MAINTENANCE, VERIFICATION AND MONITORING OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- 3.4.9 The primary mechanisms by which academic standards within the UCO are maintained include:
- a) Approval and periodic review of courses, which includes verification that relevant external standards and reference points, such as the national subject benchmark statements and SEEC Credit Level Descriptors, have been used appropriately in the design of learning outcomes and level of an award;
 - b) Accreditation of courses and awards by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) (e.g. the General Osteopathic Council⁷), where appropriate;
 - c) Implementation of a comprehensive Appraisal and Professional Development Review Policy⁸ applicable to all UCO staff;
 - d) Ongoing monitoring of student attendance and coursework assessment⁹;
 - e) The use of a Common Assessment Grading Scheme¹⁰ throughout the UCO for its taught courses, and appropriate grading of the Access Course provided by Laser Learning Awards¹¹ and research degrees approved by the University of Bedfordshire¹²;
 - f) The implementation of a comprehensive double and second marking policy across assignments for foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate taught students, and anonymous marking (i.e. by candidate number and not by name) as appropriate¹³;
 - g) The requirement for all final examination marks to be agreed by a Board of Examiners consisting of internal markers and External Examiners¹⁴;
 - h) The role of External Examiners and Moderators to ensure academic standards regarding the assessment of students, including the moderation of the standard of work carried out by students, and examining and providing judgements on the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment process and the standards of student performance¹⁵;
 - i) The experience of internal examiners who serve as External Examiners in other educational institutions to ensure comparability of standards.
- 3.4.10 External Examiners play a fundamental role in monitoring and verifying the UCO's academic standards, within the UCO and across the higher education sector. Further details of the UCO's practices and policies regarding external examining in foundation and taught courses and programmes are given in AQF Section 11: External Examining.

d) THE REVIEW OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- 3.4.11 The UCO reviews its Academic Regulations regularly and amends its policies and procedures in response to any sector changes as appropriate.

- 3.4.12 Performance indicators including entry criteria, retention rates, progression rates, assessment outcomes and first-destination statistics are analysed and reviewed on an annual basis as part of the UCO's Annual Reporting activities¹⁶. Where appropriate, academic standards associated with a particular course may be reviewed, and this review may lead to changes in relevant areas such as learning outcomes, assessment criteria and methods and delivery.
- 3.4.13 Any change made to a UCO approved course or unit is discussed with relevant students and External Examiners as appropriate, is considered by the UCO's relevant academic committees, and is approved by the UCO's Academic Council according to the UCO's quality process¹⁷.
- 3.4.14 Any change made to a University of Bedfordshire approved course or unit is discussed with the relevant students and External Examiners as appropriate, is considered by the UCO's relevant academic committees, and is approved by the University of Bedfordshire following its quality process¹⁸.
- 3.4.15 Any change made to the Access Course validated by LASER follows the LASER quality processes for amendments to units and courses¹⁹.

3.5 QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

- 3.5.1 The UCO has a strategic commitment to enhancing quality and standards and this is encapsulated within the UCO's Strategic Plan (Strategic Aim 1: Quality Higher Education).
- 3.5.2 Quality and standards are enhanced using a number of mechanisms including:
- a) **The UCO's Academic Committees**, which individually operate according to prescribed Terms of Reference that enable each committee to fulfil its remit transparently and efficiently, and together form part of a cohesive academic committee structure²⁰. Committee Terms of Reference and the committee structure is monitored by the Policy, Regulations and Audit Group and is normally reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that committee effectiveness is maintained or enhanced appropriately.
 - b) **Course Team Journals/Course Team Minutes**,²¹ which are completed by Course Teams enabling them to disseminate good practice and identify issues and actions for development and enhancement with each other.
 - c) **The Annual Staff Conference**, where both academic and non-academic staff participate in a weekend of staff development. Activities include the presentation of Annual Course Reports and discussion of key issues, with the aim of disseminating good practice and enhancing institution-wide standards and quality.
 - d) **Unit Annual Reporting**,²² whereby Unit Leaders complete a Unit Annual Monitoring Report (UAMR)²³. These annual reports review measurable actions based on student and external examiners' feedback to ensure the quality review and enhancement of each unit.
 - e) **Course Annual Reporting**,²⁴ whereby Course Leaders complete a Course Annual Monitoring Report (CAMR).²⁵ These reports review measurable actions based on the Unit Report Forms, as well as student and staff feedback, to assure that each course undergoes sufficient quality review.
 - f) **Periodic Course Reviews / Course Revalidation**²⁶, whereby Course Teams substantively review course provision, identify areas for enhancement, and disseminate good practice. These events provide an in-depth process that enables greater reflection than annual monitoring, and covers progress over a longer time frame (typically five years).
 - g) **Institutional Annual Reporting:**
 - a. Of the UCO²⁷ to inform students and the wider public whether the UCO meets academic standard and provision expectations of the higher education sector.

- b. Of Collaborative Partners²⁸, whereby senior members of collaborative partner institutions appraise their partnership with the UCO.
- h) **Peer Review of Teaching**, which takes place as part of the UCO's annual Performance Development Reviews in line with the UCO's Appraisal & Professional Development Review Policy²⁹.
- i) **Student Feedback Mechanisms**³⁰ including termly Student-Staff Liaison Consultation Group meetings, the Student Voice e-forum, annual course and institutional surveys and the UCO's open door policy.

3.6 TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT

- 3.6.1 A key priority at the UCO is ensuring effective teaching, learning and assessment of its students.
- 3.6.2 The UCO's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Operational Plan includes actions and targets to ensure that progressive approaches to learning, teaching and assessment are incorporated into an engaging curriculum that fully meets our students' needs.
- 3.6.3 This operational plan is developed and reviewed by the Education Enhancement & Strategy Committee to ensure that it remains current, reflects the UCO's short and long term goals regarding teaching, learning and assessment, and is amended appropriately in response to changes in the HE and health care sectors.
- 3.6.4 The UCO's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy³¹ also considers its diverse student population, and aims to accommodate the different teaching, learning and assessment needs of students by providing a variety of options regarding attendance patterns, learning styles, and assessment methods.
- 3.6.5 Student support mechanisms are also considered as part of this strategy, to enable students to become active, independent and responsible learners, achieving their maximum potential and enabling them to demonstrate their achievement fully and successfully. In support of this goal, the UCO recognises the need for well-educated, resourceful and proactive staff fully committed to best practices in teaching and associated scholarship.
- 3.6.6 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy is designed to align closely with other elements of the UCO's Strategic Plan to achieve and continually develop high quality learning and teaching, which embraces the diversity of its student population and the osteopathic and healthcare professions.

AQF03: FORMS & TEMPLATES

Form / Template Reference Number	Form / Template Title
N/A	N/A

AQF03: ENDNOTES

- ¹ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/UCO_Committees/: Committee Terms of Reference
- ² http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/UCO_Committees/: UCO Committee Structure
- ³ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/Academic_Quality/: AQF Section 2 - Teaching and Learning at the UCO
- ⁴ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/Academic_Quality/: AQF Section 7 - Academic Regulations
- ⁵ <http://www.beds.ac.uk/about-us/our-university/academic-information>
- ⁶ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/policies_and_procedures/staff: Staff Recruitment Policy & Procedure
- ⁷ <http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/practice/information-for-education-providers/>
- ⁸ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/policies_and_procedures/staff: Appraisal & Professional Development Review Policy
- ⁹ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/UCO_Committees/: Student Attendance & Retention Group Terms of Reference and Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference
- ¹⁰ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/Academic_Quality/: AQF Section 7 - Academic Regulations
- ¹¹ <http://laser-awards.org.uk/content2.asp?id=52>: LASER Assessment & Grading
- ¹² <http://www.beds.ac.uk/about-us/our-university/academic-information>
- ¹³ http://intranet.bsoUCO.ac.uk/Academic_Quality/: AQF Section 7 – Academic Regulations Examining
- ¹⁴ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/UCO_Committees/: Board of Examiners Terms of Reference
- ¹⁵ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/Academic_Quality/: AQF Section 11 - External Examining
- ¹⁶ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/Academic_Quality/: AQF Section 5 - Annual Monitoring & Reporting
- ¹⁷ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/Academic_Quality/: AQF Section 4 - Course & Unit Approval & Modifications to Courses & Units
- ¹⁸ <http://www.beds.ac.uk/about-us/our-university/quality/handbook>: Chapter 2 Approval & Modifications to Courses & Units
- ¹⁹ <http://laser-awards.org.uk/Index.asp>: Laser Learning Awards
- ²⁰ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/UCO_Committees/: UCO Committee Structure
- ²¹ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/Academic_Quality/: AQF Section 5: Course Team Journal Template
- ²² http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/Academic_Quality/: AQF Section 5 - Annual Monitoring & Reporting
- ²³ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/Academic_Quality/: AQF Section 5 - Unit Annual Monitoring Report Form
- ²⁴ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/Academic_Quality/: AQF Section 5 - Annual Monitoring & Reporting
- ²⁵ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/Academic_Quality/: AQF Section 5 - Course Annual Monitoring Report Form
- ²⁶ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/Academic_Quality/: AQF Section 6 - Periodic Review
- ²⁷ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/Academic_Quality/: AQF Section 5 - Periodic Review
- ²⁸ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/Academic_Quality/: AQF Section 16 - Collaborative Activity
- ²⁹ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/policies_and_procedures/staff: Appraisal & Professional Development Review Policy
- ³⁰ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/Academic_Quality/: AQF Section 10 - The Student Voice
- ³¹ http://uco.bso.ac.uk/teaching_and_learning/teaching_and_learning_strategy