

# Learning and Teaching & Assessment Strategy 2021 – 2026

Document no:	4.1
Version no:	23.3
Author:	Head of Compliance
Last review date:	March 23
Next review due:	Sept 2024
Responsible Committee:	AcB
Approved by & date:	BoG 2022
Linked policies:	<p>Academic Misconduct Policy</p> <p>Observation of Learning and Teaching Policy</p> <p>Academic Appeals Policy</p> <p>Assessment Policy</p> <p>Admissions Policy</p> <p>Recognition of Prior Learning Policy</p> <p>Equality &amp; Diversity Policy</p>
External references	<p>UK Quality Code UKSCQA/02 [May 2018]</p> <p>Core Practices:</p> <p>S1, S2, S3, S4, Q2, Q8, Q9</p>

	Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) British Council (BC) Pearson (Edexcel) International Organisation for Standardisation ISO), Accreditation Service of International Colleges (ASIC), Office for Students (OfS).
Audience:	Programme Leaders, Tutors, Students

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## **1 Introduction**

This document sets out Oxford Business College's (OBC) Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTA). It covers the scope of the strategy including the Boards and Committees that oversee its delivery. It covers the aims and objectives of the strategy and how they are implemented. It also sets down the key principles that determine how the College evaluates its learning, teaching and assessment activities and its CPD activities for academic staff.

## **2 Purpose**

The LTA strategy is designed to ensure that our educational provision supports the College's Strategic Plan, which aims to empower students from diverse backgrounds, ensure academic excellence, and enhance graduate outcomes. To achieve this, we have identified four key aims for our Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) strategy, which include providing a personalised supportive learning experience, helping students to become business leaders and entrepreneurs, ensuring academic excellence, and enhancing graduate outcomes through employability competencies. We have also set out 12 specific objectives for the LTA strategy, which range from ensuring consistency in learning outcomes to promoting accessibility and inclusivity, and from embedding a personalised approach to LTA to providing a well-managed virtual learning environment. Our Learning and Teaching Policy is designed to support these aims and objectives, and it provides a framework for the continuous enhancement and quality assurance of the teaching and learning experiences we offer to our students..

## **3 Scope of the LTA Strategy**

The LTA Strategy covers all aspects of LTA on our academic programmes. The LTA strategy is aligned to the College's Strategic Plan (2021-26), the core practices of the UK Quality Code (UKSQA) and the levels and qualification descriptors in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). The LTA strategy informs the basis for programme delivery and the use approaches to pedagogy that the college wishes to implement. This document informs the Observation of Learning and Teaching Policy, the Continuous Professional Development Policy and the Assessment Policy.

## **4 Aims and Objectives of the LTA Strategy**

## 4.1 Aims

In line with the College's Strategic Plan, the LTA strategy aims to:

- Empower students from all backgrounds to transform their lives, especially non-traditional students from low participation areas in the UK.
- Ensure learning, teaching and assessment lead to excellence in academic achievement through the provision of high-quality education by experienced and qualified academic staff.
- Ensure learning, teaching and assessment enhance successful graduate outcomes through the development of employability competencies that will support local, national, and international businesses and economies.
- Provide a personalised supportive learning experience throughout all programmes of study.
- Help students to become business leaders and entrepreneurs with innovative thinking, knowledge, skills and confidence to succeed in the real business world.

## 4.2 Objectives of the LTA Strategy

The LTA strategy includes the objective for the effective implementation of teaching learning and assessment at the college. The implementation framework for each element is provided in Appendix 1 Teaching and Learning Implementation framework, and Appendix 2 Assessment Objectives Framework.:

### Learning and Teaching

- To ensure that all learning and teaching at the College is focussed upon student attainment of credit-bearing learning outcomes to a standard that is consistent with the national qualifications' framework, and provides students with a clear and structured progression route.
- To ensure that students on each programme receive the same standard of education and a similar learning experience throughout the student journey regardless of which campus they are based.
- To ensure that students are able to exceed the threshold levels that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.
- To ensure students with disclosed special needs or disabilities are given the same opportunities for academic excellence and graduate employment outcomes regardless of which programme or in which campus they are studying.

- To embed a personalised approach to learning, teaching and assessment through personal tutoring and additional support tailored for the needs of the student profile and especially non-traditional students.
- To ensure that LTA incorporates opportunities for students to set up, run and work for micro-businesses or SMEs.
- To recruit, retain and harness the knowledge and skills of experienced and qualified lecturers for the benefit of students, including people with industry experience and a background in the real business world.
- To ensure that academic staff have access to continuous professional development (CPD) that is relevant to the needs and membership of professional bodies such as the HEA Fellowship and Chartered Association of Business Schools with accredited CMBA training available for academic staff.
- To provide blended and distance delivery modes of LTA where possible, in order to accommodate non-traditional students from low participation areas and international students.
- To provide high quality learning environment and resources.
- To provide a well-resourced and well managed virtual learning environment for all programmes.
- To ensure that all information and support provided by the College about courses are accurate and accessible to all prospective and current students and stakeholders.
- To ensure that LTA undergoes a robust cycle of quality assurance and enhancement through effective Boards and Committees.

## **Assessments**

- To ensure that assessments are appropriate for the needs of students and are aligned with partner organisations, awarding bodies and the Framework for Higher Education
- To provide a variety of assessment types so that all student interests, abilities and preferences are accommodated wherever possible
- To ensure that students on each programme are assessed to the same level for achievement of the same standard of award regardless of which campus they are based.
- To make reasonable adjustments to assessments where necessary so that students with disabilities or special needs can be fairly assessed along with their peers

- To ensure that all students receive equal access to support and preparations for assessments and examinations with equal opportunity to meet explicit and transparent assessment criteria for all learning outcomes at all grade and classification boundaries
- To ensure that assessment feedback and marking is accurate, constructive, developmental, reliable, consistent, fair and valid

## 5 Boards and Committees

The LTA strategy underpins the functions of the following Boards and Committees that are responsible for the planning, delivery, monitoring, and review of Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA):

- Course Committees (CCs) report termly to the Academic Board (AcB) on the delivery of each course including the application of OBC's LTA strategy
- Quality and Enhancement Committee (QEC) is the deliberative arm of the Academic Board, responsible for enhancing the quality of all aspects of the student experience at the College and in particular LTA.
- Partnerships and Programmes Review and Development Committee (PPRDC) reports to the Academic Board and ensures that any new and existing programmes at the College are aligned to the LTA strategy.
- The Assessment/Exams Board reports to the Academic Board and is responsible for ensuring examinations and assessment procedures follow the College's assessment strategy, awarding body regulations and any other regulations that may govern assessments.
- The Academic Board (AcB) provides oversight of all higher education and the student experience at the College, with clear focus on learning, teaching and assessment.

## 6 Quality of Learning & Teaching Criteria

The College applies the following criteria, linked to the College's strategic priorities, in order to assess the quality of Learning and Teaching in order to ensure the aims and objectives of LTA strategy are met:

- Effective course and lesson planning.
- Becoming an independent learner.
- Inclusive engagement and participation of all students.

- Teaching of subject knowledge and skills meets the differentiated needs of students.
- Development of higher-level thinking.

These five criteria are linked to the criteria for observations of learning and teaching and incorporate the following features:

## 6.1 Effective Course and lessons planning

Module and lesson planning are essential for ensuring that all the key contents of a course and/or module are covered appropriately with adequate time and resources available for each aspect of the course. Lesson planning is important in order to ensure that the tutor has prepared lessons that are tailored to the specific needs of students and facilitate optimal development of knowledge and skills in relation to learning outcomes.

## 6.2 Becoming an independent learner

is the participation of students in the enhancement of their own learning and development. As stated in the UK Quality Code, '*[e]ffective learning and teaching encourage students to take an active role in their studies*'. The College encourages independent learning by creating the conditions needed for students to meet learning objectives through proactive student-led activities in and out of the classroom.

## 6.3 Inclusive engagement and participation of all students

Inclusive engagement and participation are facilitated through a student-centred approach by promoting teaching techniques designed to engage all students as active students as much as possible during lessons. These include, but are not restricted to:

- Controlling teacher talking time (TTT).
- Varying student interaction to ensure that students talk to each other as well as the tutor during lessons.
- Giving students tasks that require them to work collaboratively and co-creatively with the tutor as well as their colleagues.
- Setting high expectations that encourage students to achieve and exceed their learning expectations
- Motivating students by recognising and celebrating their success.

- Using all facilities and equipment such as the VLE (Moodle or Blackboard), Zoom video conferencing software, Smart Board, physical and virtual classrooms including break out rooms.

## **6.4 Teaching of subject knowledge and skills must meet the differentiated needs of students**

Effective teaching of subject knowledge and skills is required to meet the expectations of awarding and validating bodies and employers and provide students with opportunities to achieve academic excellence and employment outcomes.

Lecturers are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the varied learning needs and styles of their students, and to differentiate their instruction accordingly. This means that lecturers must plan lessons that are inclusive and accessible to all students, regardless of their individual learning needs. They must use a range of teaching strategies, resources and technologies to provide opportunities for active engagement, and they must provide regular feedback to their students to help them monitor their progress and identify areas for improvement. Lecturers must also be aware of any accommodations or modifications that are required for students with special needs or disabilities, and they must work collaboratively with other professionals to ensure that all students are able to access the curriculum. By meeting the differentiated needs of their students, lecturers can help to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that fosters student achievement and success.

This is achieved through the recruitment and development of experienced and qualified tutors including those with industry experience and in-depth understanding of their field. It is supported by observations of learning and teaching with constructive feedback and a well-designed syllabus of internal and external continuous professional development. It is also enhanced through the engagement of tutors in research as well as accredited CPD through HEA Fellowship and the CMBE scheme.

## **6.5 Development of higher-level thinking**

Development of higher-level thinking is essential for students to achieve excellence in the academic studies and the development of employability competencies that will enhance their employment opportunities upon graduation. For this reason learning and teaching at the College always aims to



challenge students to critically analyse and evaluate the content of what they learn. They are encouraged to synthesise, reflect on and make judgements about the information there are introduced to. They are taught to apply different theories in real life situations, to compare and contrast different theories and their practical implications, and to challenge the assumptions of the ideas and examples they are presented with. Students are also encouraged to think creatively as they research and discover their own lines of enquiry and reach their own well-supported conclusions.

## Appendix 1: Objectives and Implementation of Learning & Teaching

Objectives	Implementation
<p>To ensure that all learning and teaching at the College is focussed upon student attainment of credit-bearing learning outcomes to a standard that is consistent with the national qualifications' framework, and provides students with a clear and structured progression route</p>	<p>Rigorous review and academic due diligence carried out by the Partnerships, Programmes Review and Development Committee (PPRDC) before any new partnership or programme is introduced at the College to ensure it is aligned with the College's Strategic Plan, LTA and Strategy, the UK Quality Code and the Framework for Higher Education</p>
<p>To ensure that students on each programme receive the same standard of education and a similar learning experience throughout the student journey regardless of which campus they are based.</p>	<p>Heads of Programme report to Academic Board (AcB) on the standardisation of learning and teaching and the student experience in every campus where their programme is being delivered. Reports are provided to the Quality &amp; Enhancement Committee (QEC) on a regular basis and to Academic Board on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Tutors meet regularly in order to share a common understanding of the level descriptors in the Framework for Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) and how to approach learning outcomes in order to meet the</p>

	requirements of the national subject benchmark statements for general business and management.
To ensure that students are able to exceed the threshold levels that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers	Rigorous admissions policy and procedures, including academic interviews and comprehensive English language testing, carried out by qualified staff as required
	Provision of student support and welfare services to encourage good attendance, engagement and achievement
To ensure students with disclosed special needs or disabilities are given the same opportunities for academic excellence and graduate employment outcomes regardless of which programme or in which campus they are studying	Individual support from student support and welfare officers provided to student with special needs of disabilities

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
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To embed a personalised approach to learning, teaching and assessment through personal tutoring and additional support tailored for the needs of the student profile and especially non-traditional students	Personal and professional development planning support available for students
	Additional workshops, academic study clinics and personal tutoring available for all students
To ensure that LTA incorporates opportunities for students to set up, run and work for micro-businesses or SMEs.	Creating assignment briefs based on live business projects in collaboration with local organisations or the students' own businesses wherever possible in order to support employability competencies including self-employment
	Academic support officers encourage and support students to engage with an incubation hub to set and run small businesses
To recruit, retain and harness the knowledge and skills of experienced and qualified lecturers for the benefit of students, including people with industry experience and a background in the real business world	Recruitment of experienced and qualified staff to deliver high quality education and personalised academic support
	Lesson observations for all tutors in line with the Observation of Learning and Teaching Policy, with developmental feedback and action plans

Objectives	Implementation
To ensure that academic staff have access to continuous professional development (CPD) that is relevant to the needs and membership of professional bodies such as the HEA Fellowship and Chartered Association of Business Schools with accredited CMBA training available for academic staff	<p>Relevant continuous professional development (CPD) for academic staff in line with the CPD Policy, including HEA Fellowship and CPD accredited by the Certified Management and Business Educator (CMBE)</p> <p>Research activity on pedagogical implications of different theories and approaches, cascaded through staff training and development (CPD), monitored in lesson observations and through evaluation and analysis of the impact on student learning</p>
To provide blended and distance delivery modes of LTA where possible, in order to accommodate non-traditional students from low participation areas and international students.	Development of distance and/or blended learning curricula where possible to provide students with alternative modes of LTA.
To provide high quality learning environment and resources	Provision of well-resourced and maintained physical campuses in strategic locations that benefit a diverse and inclusive body of students

<p>To provide a well-resourced and well managed virtual learning environment for all programmes</p>	<p>Train staff and students in the effective use of Moodle, Blackboard, Microsoft Teams, and other video conferencing software (Zoom) that are accessible, relevant and engaging for students, in line with the College's VLE Policy</p>
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Objectives	Implementation
<p>To ensure that all information and support provided by the College about courses are accurate and accessible to all prospective and current students and stakeholders</p>	<p>Clear details on learning, teaching and assessment provided to all students during admissions and inductions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ General admissions information</li> <li>▪ Entry requirements</li> <li>▪ Progression routes</li> <li>▪ Course outlines</li> <li>▪ Module specifications</li> <li>▪ Mode of learning</li> <li>▪ LTA Methods</li> <li>▪ Attainment of higher grades</li> <li>▪ Academic calendar</li> <li>▪ Lesson timetables</li> <li>▪ Academic regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attendance and Engagement</li> <li>- Submissions</li> <li>- Deadlines</li> <li>- Extensions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Resubmissions</li> <li>- Capping of grades</li> <li>- Retakes</li> <li>- Mitigating circumstances</li> <li>- Academic malpractice such as plagiarism</li> <li>- Appeals</li> <li>▪ Information on fees and access to SLC</li> <li>▪ Information on relevant partner organisations</li> </ul>
<p>To ensure that LTA undergoes a robust cycle of quality assurance and enhancement through effective Boards and Committees</p>	<p>Review of LTA for all new programmes through the Partnerships and Programmes Review and Development Committee (PPRDC)</p>
	<p>Monitor and enhance LTA through the Quality and Enhancement Committee (QEC)</p>



## Appendix 2: Objectives and Implementation of Assessments

Objectives	Implementation
To ensure that assessments are appropriate for the needs of students and are aligned with partner organisations, awarding bodies and the Framework for Higher Education	Academic regulations on assessments are regularly updated and monitored by the Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC) to ensure they are accessible and aligned with partner organisations and awarding bodies where necessary
To provide a variety of assessment types so that all student interests, abilities and preferences are accommodated wherever possible	Recommendations to the Partnerships and Programmes Review and Development Committee (PPRDC), Course Committees (CC), Assessment Board (AB) or to the Quality and Enhancement Committee
To make reasonable adjustments to assessments where necessary so that students with disabilities or special needs can be fairly assessed along with their peers	(QEC) by programme leaders and module leaders on the variation, any reasonable adjustments (for disabled students) and enhancement of assessment methods and briefs, examination papers and grading schemes, including those provided by awarding organisations and validating bodies where possible

<p>To ensure that students on each programme are assessed to the same level for achievement of the same standard of award regardless of which campus they are based.</p>	<p>Regular standardisation meetings and training ensure that all faculty agree upon common assessment approaches that enable students to meet the same standards required to achieve the award in all campuses.</p>
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Objectives	Implementation
<p>To ensure that all students receive equal access to support and preparations for assessments and examinations with equal opportunity to meet explicit and transparent assessment criteria for all learning outcomes at all grade and classification boundaries</p>	<p>Personal tutoring and additional academic clinics, workshops and seminars to help all students attain the knowledge and skills they need to improve their assessed work or, if relevant, their performance in examinations.</p>
	<p>Equal and timely access to formative assessments and feedback (within a maximum of three weeks from submission) for all students, with ample time to improve their performance prior to summative assessments or examinations</p>
	<p>Holistic assessments encouraged where possible, taking account of the interrelatedness of learning outcomes and assessment criteria, and assessing performance and achievement around the attainment of transferrable skills and higher-order thinking skills.</p>
<p>To ensure that assessment feedback and marking is accurate, constructive, developmental, reliable, consistent, fair and valid</p>	<p>Regular standardisation meetings and robust internal verification processes ensure the integrity of assessments and examinations</p>
	<p>Relevant assessments are moderated by external examiners through partner organisations or awarding bodies</p>