SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC POLICY DECISIONS - SPRING AND SUMMER 2009

This information note refers to decisions made at the following meetings:

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee – 04/02/09 and 06/05/09 Undergraduate School Board 18/03/09 and 10/06/09 Graduate School Board – 18/03/09 (cancelled) and 03/06/09 Senate – 22/04/09 and 01/07/09

Minute numbers are given to indicate the source of the information set out below. Where extracts of minutes are included verbatim, this is indicated by speech marks.

Note: Senate minute numbers will be added to the document, once these are known and will be added to the online version of this document at: http://www.essex.ac.uk/minute/apd/2008-2009/infonote_sprsumm09.doc

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FOR ACTION

1. Amendments to Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Rules of Assessment (S.MM.130-132/09 and S.MM.135-151/09)

There are further approved variations to the Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Rules of Assessment, which can be found at:

http://www2.essex.ac.uk/academic/students/ug/newrules.htm and

http://www2.essex.ac.uk/academic/students/pgt/pgrules.htm

2. **Report from the Working Party on Fitness to Practice** (QAEC.MM.50-62/09) and S.M.230/09

'Resolved

- a) that departments with programmes which are relevant to the Fitness to Practice Policy should establish a committee, called the Professional Suitability Group to receive reports and information on, disciplinary matters, academic offences and other issues which might relate to fitness to practise. The Departmental Professional Suitability Group should act as a 'gateway', to consider these issues in the light of fitness to practice and to make appropriate referral;
- b) that, in order to ensure transparency, details of the departmental procedures relating to the Professional Suitability Group to be included in Departmental Handbooks;
- c) that departments should establish an administrative procedure for collating information on the outcomes of academic offences and progress cases, including those related to disability, and provide it for the gateway group;
- d) that the Proctor's Office should establish a procedure to identify students for whom there is a fitness to practise implication;
- e) that the Proctor's Office should establish a procedure for informing the relevant Department if there is a proven disciplinary case in respect of a student for whom there is a fitness to practise implication;
- f) that departments should incorporate information received from the Proctor's office regarding disciplinary cases into their procedures for collating information on Academic offences and progress cases;
- g) that in the *Breach of Professional Conduct and Termination of Training Procedure*, the name of 'Professional Misconduct Committee' should be changed to 'Professional Practice and Conduct Committee'. The procedure should be reviewed to ensure the wording is appropriate to professional suitability issues related to health or other issues as well as disciplinary issues;
- h) that the *Breach of Professional Conduct and Termination of Training Procedure* should be listed in the University Calendar;
- that departments should ensure that a statement about the sharing of information in cases of issues of fitness to practise should appear on the application forms for continuing professional development students;
- that an addition should be made to the guidance for completion of Extenuating Circumstances forms to inform students that although information given on such forms is confidential, it could be shared with other authorities if the circumstances raised issues of fitness to practise;
- k) that the guidelines for establishing a Professional Suitability Group should be approved with immediate effect.'

'Resolved

that the amendments to the Breach of Professional Conduct and Termination of Training Procedure, as detailed in Annex 1 of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee report (S/09/49, copy attached to the file copy of the minutes), should be approved with effect from 2009/10.'

www.essex.ac.uk/academic/docs/regs/fitness.shtm

3. Amendments to the University Marking Policy (S.M.235/09)

Resolved

'that the marking policy be approved with effect from 09/10, subject to the resolution of the matter raised by the Graduate School Board.'

 $\frac{https://www.essex.ac.uk/committees/committeedocs/GSBD/2008/documents/2009-06-03 item 6i.doc}{06-03 item 6i.doc}$

SECTION B - FOR INFORMATION

1. Amendments to the Academic Offences Procedures (S.M.233/09)

Resolved

'that the changes to the Academic Offences Procedures as set out in Appendix B of the Undergraduate School Board Report (S/09/50, copy attached to the file copy of the minutes) be approved with effect from 2009-10.'

See Appendix 1 attached.

2. Student self-submission to Turnitin (QAEC.MM.29-35/09)

'Noted

A report summarising the findings of a project to investigate student self-submission to the online plagiarism detection service, Turnitin. Four departments had been recruited to trial different versions of student-self submission. After each trial a full evaluation was completed and the trial was refined and completed again. As a consequence of these findings, the Learning and Teaching Unit made a number of recommendations to the Committee.

One of the most significant technical disincentives to permitting self-submission was the potential for 'self-plagiarism' as anything previously submitted by the student would become part of the Turnitin database of possible sources of material. This could mask actual plagiarism and increase workload for staff trying to evaluate Originality Reports. However, since the completion of the project, the Turnitin software had been updated, and it was now possible for prior submissions to be excluded from the database of sources searched by the service.

ISS were exploring developing the links between the internal Online Coursework Submission service and Turnitin.

The Committee determined that a permissive policy should be adopted but that, rather than being prescriptive about how self-submission was used, the Learning and Teaching Unit should produce guidelines and support tutors in the adoption of the best approach for them.

Resolved

- (a) that Student submission to Turnitin should be allowed, where deemed appropriate by the module tutor;
- (b) that the Learning and Teaching Unit should produce guidelines on the adoption of self-submission to support departments;
- (c) that students should be warned that a clean Originality Report would not be accepted as proof that they had not committed plagiarism, due to the limitations of the service.'

3. Quality Enhancement and Assurance in online assessments (QAEC.MM.45-46/09)

'Noted The proposed baseline set of requirements aimed at improving the quality

assurance in relation to all online assessments.

Resolved that, subject to some minor amendments noted in the meeting, the Online

Assessment Checklists should be approved for implementation from 2009/10.

4. Stage 2 new course approval (QAEC.M.63/09)

Resolved 'that, with effect from 2009/10, Deans should have the authority to approve new

courses that fall within category one of the Stage 2 approval criteria for provision to be offered at any of the University's three campuses.'

5. Report from the working party on undergraduate modular study (UGSB.MM.81-90/09)

'Noted The recommendations outlined in the Working Group's report would serve as the basis

for formulating a policy for undergraduate modular programmes of study. A set of guidelines for staff and students would be devised over the summer and published in

time for the new academic year.

Resolved that the recommendations put forward by the Working Group, as outlined below, be approved and introduced as policy with effect from October 2009/10. These would be reported to Senate in July 2009 for information. A formal policy and framework for

Undergraduate Modular Study would be devised over the summer and reported to Senate

in October 2009.

Recommendation 1

All proposals to offer a course or series of modules by modular study need specific approval.

Recommendation 2

Communications and External Relations should engage with departments to determine whether a potential market for modular study exists, taking into account departmental market plans, and their findings should be discussed by Faculty Steering Groups.

Recommendation 3

In principle External Relations should take control of all admissions, including modular students, and the systems and processes in relation to admissions and student records for modular study should be enhanced to support record keeping and provide management information.

Recommendation 4

The fee for modular study will be set as part of the approval process and take into account market forces and the effect of regulations on equivalent or lower qualifications (ELQs).

Recommendation 5

That students applying to study towards an approved University of Essex award may be allowed to enrol directly onto a higher level module with relevant qualifications or credits in accordance with the University's AP(E)L policy.

Recommendation 6

A variation to the rules of assessment for modular study should be devised by the Rules of Assessment Working Group to reflect the additional flexibility offered to modular students.

Recommendation 7

That the maximum period of registration for an approved University award offered at the modular level should be agreed at the point of approval, taking into account any requirements of a professional or academic nature.

Recommendation 8

Where possible, module Exam Boards should be conflated with Exam Boards that consider the grids of full-time students.'

6. Provision of material in the course materials repository (UGSB.MM.62-64/09)

'Received

A paper summarising the discussion at each Faculty Board on the minimum departmental requirements for the provision of material in the Course Materials Repository (CRM).

Discussed

There was a diversity of practice and in some cases a divergence between staff and student views on what was desirable. Departments expressed a number of pedagogical and practical concerns. Given this diversity it was suggested that the matter should be determined at departmental level. Departments should discuss and agree with their students what information would be published for a module on the CMR. This should then be published in the department handbook so that it was clear to students what information they should expect to be able to access for each module. Where departments used another online environment other than the CMR this would continue to be acceptable.

Agreed

Departments should publish in their student handbooks a statement on what material will be published on the CMR, or equivalent, for each module, and this policy should be agreed following discussion at the Staff Student Liaison Committee.'

7. Revisions to Disciplinary Regulations and Procedures (S.MM.168-175/09)

(b) Revisions to Disciplinary Regulations and Procedures (DMP/08/07)

'Resolved That the following paragraph be added to Regulation 13.2(f) be introduced with immediate effect:

'Possessing within the University any offensive weapon as defined in the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 and the Regulations promulgated there under or any legislation for the time being in force modifying or replacing that Act.'

'Resolved That with immediate effect the wording of Regulation 13.2(e) be amended as follows (new wording is underlined):

'failure to comply with a resolution previously imposed by the Proctor, the Disciplinary Committee or the Disciplinary Committee of Appeal, from the time of notification of the resolution or such other time as is authorised by the Disciplinary and Membership Officer, save that a period of 28 days (or exceptionally, a longer period as specified by the Disciplinary and Membership Officer) is allowed for the payment of fines, damages and costs;'

(c) Revisions to Disciplinary Regulations and Procedures (DMP/08/10)

Resolved

That the following be added as a new General Conduct Regulation with effect from 2009/10:

Students are required to notify the Proctor immediately of any conviction of a criminal offence in a court of law or formal caution for a criminal offence by a police officer.

Noted

The proposed revisions to Regulation 1.5 to incorporate the requirement for applicants to notify the Head of Admissions if they had been formally cautioned by a police officer after admission to the University had arisen for the following reasons:

- to be consistent with Disciplinary Regulations which already referred to cautions;
- to identify any cases where an applicant's ability to practise in his/her chosen profession might be affected. This might arise in relation to vocational degrees, such as those offered by the School of Health and Human Sciences.

Applicants who notified the Head of Admissions that they had been formally cautioned following admission to the University would be considered under approved procedures relating to Membership or Fitness to Practise.

Resolved

that the wording of Regulation 1.5 be revised as follows with effect from 2009/10 (new wording is underlined):

A person who, after his/her acceptance for admission as a student, has been convicted of a criminal offence in a court of law or has been formally cautioned by a police officer, other than an isolated minor offence, is required to notify the Head of Admissions immediately and may be required to withdraw from or be refused admission to the University.

(d) The Role of the Disciplinary Process in Monitoring Professional Suitability

Resolved That the following procedure be adopted with immediate effect:

a copy of all outcome letters will automatically be copied to the relevant key contact within each of the following four departments, where students studying on a specified list of courses are found guilty of committing an offence:

Department of Biological Sciences

School of Health and Human Sciences

School of Law

Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies

The key contact within the department will then determine which of these cases need to be escalated to the Dean who will then invoke step A3 of the *Breach of Professional Conduct and Termination of Training Procedure*.'

8. Learning and Teaching Strategy (S.MM.221-223/09)

'Noted

The Learning and Teaching Strategy had been developed during the last academic year in consultation with the academic community. The strategy document, which would be published online, was welcomed and thanks were accorded to all involved in its development.

The Employability Skills Working Group had been engaged in more detailed work on employability skills development, including consideration of discipline-specific skills development. This work was complementary to the generic career development, personal development and professional skills development aspects of the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

Resolved

that the **Learning and Teaching Strategy 2009-2013 be approved as set out in Appendix 1** to paper S/09/46 (copy attached to the file copy of the minutes).'

See Appendix 2 below.

9. Amendments to the Progress Procedures (S.M.232/09)

'Resolved

that the Progress Procedures should be amended with effect from 09/10 to reflect the fact that Boards of Examiners may take place at times other than June and September.

8. Progress Procedures after Undergraduate Examinations for Foundation, First and Second Year Students (For these purposes Foundation Years are considered First Year courses)

8. The Timing and Role of the Boards of Examiners

Boards of Examiners** (*The term Board of Examiners is also taken to mean Examinations Committee)

- a. There are University Rules of Assessment that set out what constitutes passing for each stage of study and eligibility for an overall award.
- b. A Board of Examiners' meeting will be held after the main summer examination period and after the resit examination period in September. However, for some courses it may be necessary to hold Board of Examiners' meetings at other points during the academic year.
- c. In June The Board of Examiners sees the marks of each student and in the light of these marks, and any other relevant information, makes a decision about the students' progress in accordance with the Rules of Assessment.
- d. The procedures following the September resit examinations will be the same as in June except that the Board of Examiners sees both the June and the September marks of each candidate and in the light of these marks, and any other relevant information, makes a decision about the students' progress in accordance with the Rules of Assessment.
- d. The Board of Examiners shall consider matters of extenuating circumstances. If the extenuating circumstances are of such a nature that a final decision cannot be reached without further investigation then the Board of Examiners should refer the <u>case student</u> to the Dean and empower the Dean to act on its behalf within the terms the Rules of Assessment.
- e. A student may appeal against the decision of a Board of Examiners in accordance with the procedures set out in <u>section 12</u> of this document.

10. Code of Practice – Professional Doctorates (S.M.243/09)

Resolved that the revisions to the Code of Practice on Professional Doctorates, as set out in

GSB/09/27, be approved with effect from 2009-10.

11. Code of Practice – Postgraduate Research Degrees (S.M.244/09)

Resolved

that the revisions to the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degrees, as set out in GSB/09/28, be approved with effect from 2009-10.

Note: further changes have been made by Chair's Action on behalf of the Graduate School Board following the changes to the Higher Degree Regulations approved by the July Senate. The Code of Practice – Postgraduate Research Degrees for 2009-2010 can be found at: www.essex.ac.uk/academic/docs/regs/prdcode.shtm and will be updated shortly with the changes for 2009-10.

12. Research Degree appeals procedures (S.M.245/09)

Resolved

that the revisions to the research degree appeals procedures, as set out in <u>GSB/09/29</u>, be approved with effect from 2009-10.

Rachel Lucas Assistant Registrar (Quality) July 2009

CIRCULATION

FOR ACTION:

Heads of Department/School

Directors of

Human Rights Centre

Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities

Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies

Study Abroad Office

Centre for Theoretical Studies

Departmental Administrators (including Centres listed above)

FOR INFORMATION:

Vice-Chancellor

Pro-Vice-Chancellors

Deans

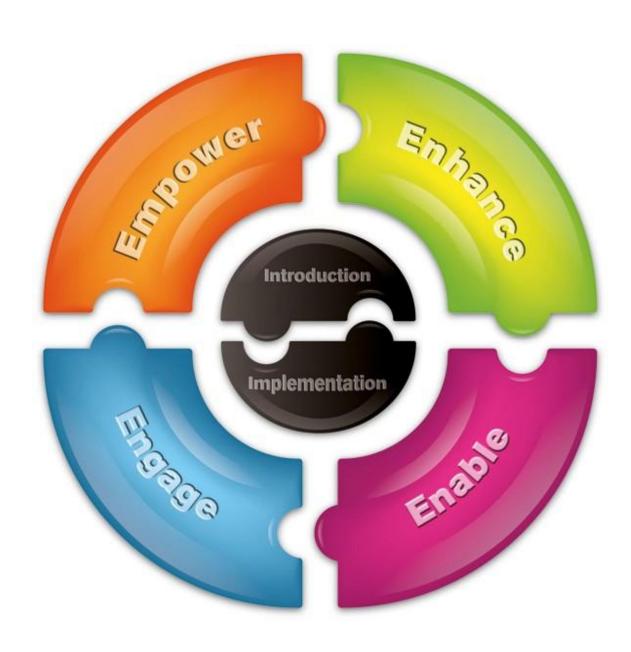
Academic Registrar

Faculty Managers

Academic Officers

Academic Offences Procedures

Learning and Teaching Strategy 2009-2013



Learning and Teaching Strategy 2009-2013

Introduction

As a University we value: the highest academic and professional standards; social, cultural and economic responsibility; environmental sustainability; diversity; equality of opportunity; integrity and leadership. Our mission is to be a globally competitive, research-intensive, student-focussed university that takes seriously its economic, social and cultural responsibilities to the Eastern region, the UK and the world.

The University is committed to growth through regional and international partnership and to developing its multi-campus footprint. It aims to recruit the best and most appropriately qualified students, irrespective of nationality, ethnic origin, disability, gender, religious belief or sexual orientation, and give them an educational and social experience that will benefit them for life.

At Essex, research, teaching and knowledge transfer enjoy parity of esteem. In this Learning and Teaching Strategy we identify future aspirations in learning and teaching and put the building blocks in place to ensure that these aspirations are realised. It is a shared vision, grounded in partnership between students, academic and support staff, external agencies and employers.

The Strategy has been shaped by the attributes that define our graduates: academic abilities, employability skills and personal and social qualities (see annex 1).

Institutional Priorities for Learning and Teaching

In realising its vision for learning and teaching, the University has identified four main strategic aims:

1. Engage our students in a high-quality, student-centred and collaborative learning experience founded on the expert knowledge of academic and support staff

Essex is a University that excels in both research and teaching, and as such successfully nurtures its students within a high-quality, challenging and inspiring learning environment. Excellent teaching integrated with the latest research and developments in our subject areas will continue to underpin the University Learning and Teaching Strategy and characterise the student experience. It is our aim to share best practice in learning and teaching with our regional and international partners.

2. Enhance the quality of the student learning experience by providing a supportive and well-resourced learning environment

Our focus is on developing an accessible, inclusive and student-centred learning experience: one which is able to evolve quickly in response to individual needs of those entering, or returning to, higher education. Our objective is to provide increasingly flexible and well-resourced provision, sustained by a team of committed and professional academic and support staff. As a University with an international mission, a core objective is to ensure that our teaching is supportive and inclusive for all students, including those of different nationalities, faiths and creeds.

3. Empower our students through academic knowledge, graduate qualities and skills that are vital for their future success

The University of Essex student experience is not confined to academic performance, but is about developing independence, experiencing a different cultural and social environment, and preparing to enter or return to working life. Qualities developed, such as analytical and critical ability, independent judgement, research, organisational and communication skills, are highly valued by employers. Our aim is to increase opportunities available beyond the lecture hall, including volunteering, part-time work, placements, and other employment-focused activities and events, equipping students with improved skills for life and the workplace or progression to higher study.

4. Enable those who teach and support student learning to develop their scholarship and professional practice

The University is committed to developing effective and innovative staff to meet its strategic objectives for teaching, research, and knowledge transfer. It values highly-qualified staff committed to enhancing the quality of the student learning experience, and therefore encourages and will facilitate engagement of all staff with its Professional Development Framework. Engagement is determined by the personal and professional aspirations of the individual, the changing context of higher education in the UK, and the University's vision and objectives.

Objectives and Key Projects

The University will achieve its strategic aims for learning and teaching through the objectives and key projects below.

1. **Engage** our students in a high-quality, student-centred and collaborative learning experience founded on the expert knowledge of academic and support staff:

Objectives

- Inspire students through high-quality, intellectually-challenging teaching informed by world-leading research and the highest academic standards.
- Develop flexible curriculum structures to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student profile.
- Employ appropriate, diverse and innovative methods of assessment that lead to progressive development of knowledge and understanding.
- Provide timely and effective feedback to promote reflection and improve performance.
- Promote the use of relevant learning technologies and modes of delivery appropriate to direct, distance and blended learning contexts.
- Work in partnership with students to ensure their views are central to the cycle of continuous quality enhancement.

Key Projects

- Introduce Faculty-level Learning and Teaching strategies that articulate how teaching is informed by discipline based research.
- Establish links between institutional Learning and Teaching and Widening Participation strategies in line with the new funding methodology for Teaching Enhancement and Student Support, and through the University's Education Outreach and Widening Participation Strategy Committee
- Develop regulations and policies that facilitate innovative teaching and diverse assessment practices.

- Expand and extend the use of learning technologies in learning, teaching and assessment building on examples of excellent practice across the University and its partners.
- Promote workshops and events with our regional and international partners to disseminate best practice in learning and teaching.
- **2. Enhance** the quality of the student learning experience through the provision of a supportive and well-resourced learning environment:

Objectives

- Provides effective physical space and online environments for student learning.
- Develop an infrastructure for learning and teaching that is inclusive, flexible and accessible.
- Implement an investment programme in specialist equipment and resources to align with the institution's strategic vision for learning and teaching.
- Anticipate and respond to the diverse and evolving needs of learners by providing academic support and guidance, enabling them to realise their full potential.
- Develop a holistic management information system that integrates learning and teaching with other aspects of the university experience.

Key Projects

- Build a new University Student Centre and Library extension to support collaborative learning, provide improved access to student services, and increase both the range and volume of academic resources available to students.
- Develop and implement diagnostic tests for literacy, numeracy and English Language skills for first-year undergraduates, and provide additional targeted in-sessional support where necessary.
- Establish mechanisms to provide targeted and integrated study skills support for students.
- Continue development of a consistent set of portals delivering information and a wide range of online services throughout the student's relationship with the University, from enquirer to alumnus.
- **3. Empower** our students through academic knowledge, graduate qualities and skills that are vital for their future success:

Objectives

- Develop students' knowledge, understanding and skills that characterise academic excellence in their chosen discipline.
- Enhance students' self-reliance and intellectual independence by developing powers of critical analysis and evaluation.
- Encourage students, through the process of Personal Development Planning, to integrate academic learning with life and work experiences, enhancing their employability.
- Develop students' abilities to plan and manage their careers and to articulate their strengths and potential contributions to current and future employers.
- Enable individual students to realise their academic potential through inclusive teaching and support mechanisms.
- Increase cultural and social awareness through engagement within the University and in local, national and international contexts.

- Implement an Employability Framework which explicitly identifies and records opportunities to develop employability skills within programmes of study, across central provision and within extra-curricular activities.
- Introduce a campus-based work placement scheme for all students to enable them to acquire realistic yet flexible work experience and professional training without compromising their academic achievement.
- Increase demand for Study Abroad among students and increase the proportion of programmes that provide this opportunity.
- Develop the network of Student Support services to help students to get the most from their studies and manage their transition through University including support for international and disabled students.
- Reinforce links between the Learning and Teaching Strategy and the Disability Equality Scheme.
- **4. Enable** those who teach and support student learning to develop their scholarship and professional practice:

Objectives

- Provide coherent, structured professional development opportunities that enable staff
 to gain qualifications, credit and recognition in line with their aspirations and
 institutional goals.
- Cultivate a community of academic practice that celebrates and shares excellence and innovation in learning, teaching and scholarship.
- Support learning and teaching projects that seek to innovate and enhance the student learning experience.
- Review the communications between academic departments and student support that
 enable the institution to anticipate and respond to the needs of students with particular
 learning needs and disabilities.
- Encourage staff to broaden their experience through interactions with collaborative partner institutions and the wider HE sector, both nationally and internationally.
- Recognise and reward individuals who make exceptional contributions to teaching and supporting student learning.

Key Projects

- Develop and validate Masters-level modules to accredit continuing professional development of new and experienced academic, support and research staff at the University and amongst our collaborative partners. Share best practice with similar Masters-level continuing professional development modules, aimed at supporting the professions of teachers, health professionals, and the children's workforce.
- Encourage and support relevant staff to meet the appropriate standard of the UK Professional Standards Framework in Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education.
- Reinforce recognition of teaching achievements in institutional human resources policies for review, reward and career progression.
- Recognise and reward innovation and excellence by funding initiatives through the Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (TALIF) and the Essex Excellence in Teaching Award (ETA).
- Secure funding from the Higher Education Academy's National Teaching Fellowship scheme.
- Expand the sharing of good practice and teaching approaches through staff development events, online guides and publications and external collaboration.

Annex 1

The University of Essex aims to help its students develop skills in the following domains, with different students achieving different combinations of skills and levels of attainment:

Academic development

- Knowledge of relevant scholarship and awareness of the limits of present understanding
- Familiarity with research methods (and associated ethical and professional issues), ability to apply specialist techniques, and willingness to objectively evaluate new ideas
- Literacy, numeracy, ICT, internet and web skills
- Analysis, evaluation, communication and presentation skills

Career development

- Career planning and awareness of labour market
- Job search, application, interview and self-presentation skills
- Willingness to acquire the skills and training needed for future career development
- Awareness of the need to be flexible and open to possible future career changes

Personal development skills

- Setting goals, planning and implementing actions, coping with set-backs and pressure
- Self-awareness, self-motivation, self-reliance, self-confidence and self-discipline
- Intellectual curiosity, imagination, creativity, initiative, adaptability and open-mindedness
- Interpersonal skills (engaging with others to establish rapport and good working relationships)
- Awareness of the importance of engaging in activities promoting physical and mental health

Professional working skills

- Teamwork, leadership and negotiation skills (including leading and being led by others)
- Experience of working on live project or case studies
- Planning and management skills (planning, managing and completing a task on time)
- Professionalism, loyalty, responsibility, integrity (achieving high standards in the workplace)

External awareness

- Respect for the ideas, cultural values and the rights of others
- Awareness of social, economic, cultural, ethical, environmental and sustainability issues
- Sense of local, regional and global perspective
- Appreciation of the value of enterprise, entrepreneurship, commerce and business skills

Experience of Work

- Learning from voluntary, placement or paid work experience and from internships or study abroad
- Understanding of work and organisational cultures
- Familiarity with expectations of the workplace
- Mature and level-headed approach to life and work