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OF ESTATE MANAGEMENT

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# Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

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Strategy to 2025

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# 1. Introduction

UCEM's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS) 2020-2025 outlines the vision for UCEM's pedagogy and assessment approach for the coming five years. Central to this vision is the enablement of UCEM's long-term institutional Vision and Strategy: To be the Centre of Excellence for Built Environment Education, within which there is a clear and defined focus on further improving both the student experience and student outcomes. This vision is underpinned by the institution's core purpose: to provide accessible, relevant and cost-effective education, which enhances careers, increases professionalism and contributes to a better Built Environment.

The LTAS 2020-25 underpins the educational ambitions set out in UCEM's *Vision and Strategy to 2025*, through the definition of six strategic LTA priorities for the upcoming five years:

1. **Student Centred:** Putting students at the heart of everything we do
2. **Industry Excellence:** Creating built environment professionals of the highest calibre
3. **Widening Access and Participation:** Offering different pathways; welcoming more diversity; improving accessibility
4. **Student Outcomes:** Maximising every student's potential
5. **Student Satisfaction:** Providing a positive, engaging, and rewarding education
6. **Strategic use of Technology:** Using technology wisely to support our vision

The LTAS 2020-2025 builds on the progress and enhancements which were driven forward in the LTAS 2016-2020, and the continued institutional commitment to a highly flexible, online learning methodology.

## 2. Strategic Aims

### 2.1 Student Centred

#### *Putting students at the heart of everything we do*

Central to our strategy is an academic community of staff and students. It is imperative for UCEM to build a strong partnership with students across all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment, to ensure that students and their needs are at the centre of everything that we do.

We will achieve this aim by:

- Pursuing student-centred learning design that supports the educational needs of a diverse student community;
- Adopting students as co-creators of learning – involving them in the design, review and enhancement of our academic programmes;
- Designing learning with flexibility in mind to support students to curate their own learning experience best suited to their needs;

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- Taking a collaborative approach to teaching, learning and assessment: paying attention to the student voice, talking to our students regularly, listening to their ideas, inviting feedback, acting upon their advice, and reporting back to them about subsequent change;
- Helping our students thrive throughout their learning experience and supporting them on their path into their chosen career;
- Acknowledging that everything we do impacts – directly or indirectly – on the student experience, therefore ensuring we consider the student perspective at every key decision point.

## 2.2 Industry Excellence

### ***Creating built environment professionals of the highest calibre***

The Built Environment industry is at the centre of UCEM's educational philosophy. Our teaching professionals have decades of experience across the Built Environment sector, and they are united in their desire to drive positive change within it.

To do so, UCEM must provide engaging and rigorous programmes of the highest quality; and to shape graduates with the right skills, understanding, and astuteness to push boundaries and to drive a positive future for the Built Environment.

We will achieve this aim by:

- Strengthening our relationships with employers, professional bodies, and leaders across the industry, harnessing their expertise to inform curricula and assessments that meet their needs;
- Building assessments that have direct application to industry standards, and that enable students to learn through real world scenarios and working practice;
- Incorporating authentic, engaging learning activities into the design of all programmes, including tasks that mirror the skills required in industry;
- Investing in talented and engaging educational staff, with a clear focus on staff development and embedding teaching excellence into staff performance and development reviews, reward and recognition;
- Developing staff to ensure that their practice is informed by developments in research, scholarship and industry, and ensuring that their own research into online learning and the built environment is disseminated back into the relevant sector through engagement with professional networks;
- Prioritising a focus on sustainability in what we teach and the way we deliver to prepare students to contribute to a sustainable global society, both now and for the future;
- Ensuring learning across all programmes is accessible, active and industry-relevant.

## 2.3 Widening Access and Participation

### ***Offering different pathways; welcoming more diversity; improving accessibility***

Widening access and participation is a key strategic aim and our core purpose sets out a clear focus on accessibility in its broadest sense. Our pedagogic approach to teaching, learning and assessment must reflect these institutional commitments. We are proud of our ability to welcome students from a variety of demographic backgrounds, and with a diverse range of skills and experience.

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Through UCEM's flexible, online approach we have a unique opportunity to provide programmes which serve the most diverse range of student needs and encourage participation through inclusivity and accessibility.

We will achieve this aim by:

- Offering programme pathways to meet the different needs of students in varied individual circumstances;
- Providing an entry-level route to access our undergraduate programmes;
- Ensuring our programmes are accessible to (and promoted to) individuals who are not currently working in the Built Environment sector, as well as those who are;
- Actively encouraging applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds and supporting them to be successful in their studies;
- Adopting a broad range of learning materials and assessment formats in every module;
- Ensuring learning resources and assessments are provided in accessible formats and are culturally and socially responsive;
- A commitment to reflecting the diversity of UCEM's staff and students within learning, teaching and assessment.

## 2.4 Student Outcomes

### *Maximising every student's potential*

We strive to ensure that every student can reach their full potential through their study at UCEM. We must offer them a seamless and supported experience that allows them to focus effectively on their programme of study, and to achieve a successful outcome.

This means committing to helping our students to study at the right pace; supporting our students to complete their intended programme of study successfully; and helping our students excel in their assessment grades and, ultimately, in their final programme award classification. In doing so we will enable our students to achieve the consistently high levels of success at UCEM that they deserve.

We will achieve this aim by:

- Adopting an academic delivery model that allows our academic staff to support our students consistently and effectively at all levels across all programmes;
- Implementing an educational framework that focusses on student-outcome led design, active pedagogies and learning community;
- Ensuring all programmes promote a logical learning journey for students;
- Supporting our students effectively through challenges in their study journey, giving opportunities to improve and build on past assessments where appropriate;
- Providing equity of experience to all students, ensuring those who have an evidenced need for additional support (to have an equal chance of success) are given it;
- Promoting mental health awareness amongst our students and supporting them with any personal difficulties they may face;
- Offering an optimal blend, and broad range, of supported asynchronous and synchronous teaching activities;

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- Ensuring assessments are relevant, fit for purpose, and clearly linked to activity steps within each module;
- Offering opportunities for self-assessment and peer-assessment throughout the learning journey, to scaffold student success and build trust in assessment.

## 2.5 Student Satisfaction

### *Providing a positive, engaging, and rewarding education*

UCEM strives to ensure every student has an enjoyable and meaningful experience throughout their learning journey.

Providing online education can be a challenge to harnessing the same sense of student engagement and satisfaction as an on-ground institution. Yet with the right engagement from academic staff, the right learning design, the right use of technology, and the right priorities in place, it can also be an opportunity to provide a different, fulfilling and equivalent student experience.

It is our goal to provide an exemplary student experience that will be evidenced through the National Student Survey and other internal and external surveys, and that will ensure our students have happy and fulfilled memories of their learning at UCEM.

We will achieve this aim by:

- Delivering consistently engaging teaching, with strong tutor presence embedded within asynchronous and synchronous teaching activities;
- Developing strong and trusting relationships between academic staff and students;
- Providing consistent, meaningful and timely feedback to students;
- Adopting a baseline quality standard requirement for the design of all modules, as well as defining an aspirational quality standard to strive for;
- Offering consistency in the quality and presentation of teaching, learning materials, and assessments, across modules and across programmes;
- Ensuring all elements of teaching, learning materials, and assessments are discipline-specific for each programme as well as supporting the acquisition and promotion of transferable skills, including research skills development;
- Promoting student community engagement and peer-to-peer learning support within modules and programmes, as well as across programmes;
- Enhancing communications to students regarding every aspect of the learning on their module, including ensuring learning requirements and assessment methodologies are clear and understandable from the outset of every module.

## 2.6 Strategic use of Technology

### *Using technology wisely to enhance our vision*

Our digital learning platforms are at the forefront of our delivery of teaching, learning and assessment, and we are committed to their continuing evolution and enhancement.

Technology is rapidly evolving in the educational space, and we intend to stay at its cutting edge. We are committed to investing in advancements, but we will ensure our use of technology is a thoughtful and integral part of our offer. Our technology implementation will be designed to enhance the learning experience for all and support a parity of experience across on-ground, blended and online teaching.

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We will achieve this aim by:

- Staying at the forefront of technological advancements in the educational space and analysing their appropriateness for inclusion in UCEM's pedagogy and teaching delivery;
- Researching and piloting innovative technologies that support our pedagogical and assessment vision, and that enhance our students' learning potential;
- Implementing the best assessment approaches made possible through digital technologies, including advancing towards more experiential assessment methodologies to enhance student assessment literacy and success;
- Adopting appropriate feedback tools to improve the consistency and value of peer-to-peer, student-to-tutor, and tutor-to-student feedback;
- Embedding suitable digital technologies to develop more inclusive provision for different learning needs;
- Developing digital spaces and networks for student communities that support the sharing of skills, knowledge and good practice that go beyond the virtual and physical classroom;
- Ensuring the resources and skills needed to develop and enhance digital education at UCEM are regularly reviewed and adequately funded.

## 3. Complementary Strategies and Reference Points

The LTAS 2020-2025 has been informed by, and will align with, the following strategies and initiatives:

- UCEM's Vision and Strategy to 2025
- Transform: The Student Success Project – Transform Project Initiation Document
- Research Strategy 2019 to 2025
- Accessibility Regulations 2018
- UCEM Access and Participation Plan 2020-2025