

## Teaching and Learning Strategy

CAT: Inspire, Inform, Enable

The Graduate School of the Environment (GSE) is committed to providing world-leading education in sustainability. We are focussed on ensuring that those students graduating from one of our GSE programmes are inspired to bring about change, well informed with specialist subject knowledge and have mastered the skills that will enable them to work towards sustainability in whatever path in life they follow.

This Teaching and Learning Strategy was drafted in the summer of 2015 in consultation with all academic staff at the CAT Graduate School of the Environment. The strategy was then augmented in December 2015 to align with the three main sections of the QAA Quality Code and the requirement for enhancement. The strategy went out to review to all academic staff and the final document was presented to the . The next stage is to present the GSE Academic Council in January 2017. The agreed strategy will then enter a system of annual review as part of the annual quality enhancement process as overseen by the Academic Council. A timetable for the development of the strategy and its review process is given below (Table 1).

**Table 1: Timetable of the design and implementation of the GSE Teaching and Learning Strategy**

Date	Task	
Summer 2015	Draft Teaching and Learning Strategy section relating to 'assuring and enhancing academic quality' was drafted and circulated to academic staff for comment	Complete
December 2015	Draft Teaching and Learning Strategy, sections on 'setting and maintaining academic standards', 'information provision' and 'continuous enhancement' were drafted and circulated to academic staff for comment.	Complete
January 2016	Draft Teaching and Learning Strategy to be presented to the Academic Council for discussion	Complete
April 2016	Teaching and Learning Strategy to be agreed by all relevant parties. Strategy actions to be disseminated to the appropriate members of the Academic Council or to Programme Committees as appropriate and a draft Action Plan for Enhancement written.	Complete
January 2017	Agreement sought at Academic Council	Complete

January 2018	Annual review of the Teaching and Learning Strategy, of progress made against the indicators. Action Plan for Enhancement reviewed and updated.	
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The Graduate School will do this through the setting and maintaining academic standards (Part A of the QAA Quality Code), assuring and enhancing academic quality (Part B of the Quality Code), through providing accurate information on our education provision (Part C of the Quality Code) and an additional section focussing on the continuous enhancement of our teaching and learning.

**Table 2: The GSE Teaching and Learning Strategy**

Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards

The GSE aims to ...	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain academic standards on existing programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of course syllabus and content in line with QAA benchmarks, professional body accreditation and 'levelness' in keeping with updates in these areas. Update programme and module specifications as required</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure compliance with national and international standards when designing new academic programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design new programmes by aligning to subject benchmarks and accreditation requirements, by using naming conventions and by alignment to correct academic standards. Ensure these are explicit in learning outcomes and aligned assessment tasks.</li> <li>Publish clear procedures for the design and development of new programmes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate internal and external review into the assessment of existing and new programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External examiner recommendations, input from professional practice and industry, the validating body, student representation and alumni.</li> </ul>

Assuring and enhancing academic quality

GSE aims to ...	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspire students to investigate energy and global sustainability issues and their solutions and to want to bring about change.</li> <li>• Teach students using enthusiastic, knowledgeable and skilled staff.</li> <li>• Ensure teaching staff have access to training to enhance teaching and learning skills and are kept informed about changes to teaching and learning techniques, such as improvements in teaching technology and availability of new academic information to students.</li> <li>• Inspire by the inclusion of guest speakers from a wide variety of renewable energy and sustainability disciplines.</li> <li>• Facilitate debate and critical analysis through developing a collaborative, friendly and thought-provoking atmosphere between students and between students and staff, and through a focus on evidence-based studies.</li> <li>• Use a variety of teaching, learning and assessment methods to inspire.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The production of high quality dissertations/major design projects covering a range of contemporary sustainability, renewable energy and energy issues.</li> <li>• A staff base of academics, professional practitioners and consultants.</li> <li>• Staff take an active part in peer-observation of teaching, and take part in available training opportunities. Training needs are fed back to Academic Council following annual professional reviews of lecturers performance.</li> <li>• The involvement of external speakers which enhances the module delivery.</li> <li>• Student feedback at the end of modules to gauge student engagement.</li> <li>• Student engagement in spoken debates, group seminars, on-line discussion forums, skype tutorials, written debates in essays or projects and reference to competing theories in peer-reviewed literature.</li> <li>• Appropriate use of mixed teaching methods such as lectures, group seminars, student-led learning, practical activities, on-line activities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform students of the knowledge base behind the multi-disciplinary science of sustainability and of the potential solutions.</li> <li>• Garner an appreciation of the value of peer-reviewed evidence and information.</li> <li>• Encourage critical analysis of scientific theory, renewable energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess student understanding by employing a variety of formative and summative assessment techniques aligned to learning outcomes.</li> <li>• The inclusion of debate, critical analysis and an understanding of uncertainty in student's work, with an appreciation of the value of peer-reviewed literature.</li> </ul>

<p>engineering and physical building options and of political and social ideas as appropriate to the study topic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High proportion of students gaining merit or distinction degree classes by producing work at Masters level which is deemed worthy of &gt;60%, and confirmed as such by moderation and external markers.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable students to be able to bring about positive change towards sustainability by embedding skills based on professional practice in teaching, learning and assessment.</li> <li>• Employ staff with up-to date experience of working in sustainability, renewable energy and built environment industries, who have consultancy or research expertise.</li> <li>• Set assessments will embed work-related skills.</li> <li>• Develop programme and module curricula which include content based on up-to-date case-studies, examples, theories and ideas taken from current best practice or from new information gained from academic or applied research.</li> <li>• Encourage inclusion by incorporating diverse examples from different nations, industries and ensure an international curriculum.</li> <li>• Use teaching and learning activities which make best use of CAT's unique on-site living laboratory as a tool to practice skills, compare techniques, and examine the practicality of sustainability, land-use management, building and energy options as appropriate to the study topic.</li> <li>• Produce graduates who are knowledgeable in their subject area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students entering sustainability and related professions, gathered by destination surveys/Linked-In/alumni networks.</li> <li>• Ensure that the complement of teaching staff are actively involved in professional practice, consultancy or research by ensuring CPD, involvement in consultancy projects or publication of peer-reviewed literature.</li> <li>• Annual monitoring of module curriculum to ensure staff current professional or academic experience is embedded in teaching, learning and assessment activities.</li> <li>• Annual review of teaching and assessment materials to ensure inclusion of international examples.</li> <li>• Develop formative and summative assessment pieces which are aligned to work skills; such as practical reports, data analysis, presentation skills.</li> </ul>

## Provision of Information

GSE aims to ...	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide clear and accessible information to potential applicants on our educational programmes including overview of syllabus, the fees, additional living and subsistence costs, employment destinations of graduates and wider student experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear website information including downloadable programme handbooks, overviews of course content, entry requirements, fees policy, graduate destination information and information on the wider student experience such as the provision of student views, and links to student blogs.</li> <li>The existence of the above information as hardcopy documents for posting to potential applicants who prefer to receive information in hardcopy format.</li> <li>Running of open days which allow potential students to meet tutors, existing students, see teaching spaces and accommodation, and ask questions about the course and wider student experience.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide clear information about the admission procedures, entry requirements, time-line of application, decision and appeals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Downloadable and hardcopy information on the degrees content, fees, admissions requirements and timelines for application, decisions and appeals.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with our validating institution in the provision of transcripts and certificates to students to denote achievement.</li> <li>Work with our validating institution to provide updates to students on module marks following assessment boards as they progress through the course.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The timely provision of certificates and transcripts to all appropriate students,</li> <li>Marks provided to students via provisional marking accompanying feedback, as transcripts from the validating institution, and the opportunity for students to discuss their marks and progress with a member of academic staff.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep accurate records on the academic progress of students enrolled, their mode of study, fees status and on the demographic, ethnic, age and other equal opportunities data. Such data will be made available to HEFCE, HESA, the QAA and BIS as required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent databases used across the degree programme areas.</li> <li>Information reviewed at Academic Council meetings to ensure completeness and to review student achievement across the programmes.</li> <li>Data that is provided in the correct format and timely manner to HEFCE, HESA, QAA and BIS.</li> </ul>

## Enhancement

GSE aims to ...	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review all student and staff feedback at Academic Council meetings, review all complaints and identify commonalities, and share examples of good practice.</li> <li>• Run an Academic Council which will review student progression, wider student experience, REP reports, external examiner comments and opportunities to enable the student to become a whole learner.</li> <li>• Engage students in the review and development both of the current academic offer and the wider student experience, and in the development of potential new programmes.</li> <li>• Incorporate external input into the review and development of courses, for instance from the external examiners, external academic members of the Academic Council, academic based trustees and employers and accrediting institutions.</li> <li>• Set and review a GSE Action Plan for Enhancement annually.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Board oversees continuous review and improvements.</li> <li>• The annual publication of an Action Plan for Enhancement based on all staff and student feedback, training needs, good practice, analysis of student achievement data and with input from academic staff, students and external individuals and bodies. This will include updates on actions from the previous year.</li> <li>• The publication of the Action Plan for Enhancement on the Virtual Learning Environment annually.</li> </ul>

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By: Academic Council

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