



Manchester  
Metropolitan  
University

# Teaching Excellence



# Contents

- 3 Mission and Identity
- 5 Analysis of Metrics
- 7 Section 1 : Teaching Quality
- 13 Section 2 : Learning Environment
- 16 Section 3 : Student Outcomes and Learning Gain
- 21 Conclusion



# Introduction

## Mission and Identity

Student success is at the heart of our mission at Manchester Metropolitan University. Through our distinctive partnership approach we provide an outstanding education and an exceptional student experience.

We understand that our undergraduate education has the most powerful impact when we deliver it through collaborations with the network of partnerships and relationships that are at the centre of our identity as a modern metropolitan university.

We work closely with our city, with business, the community and our academic peers – locally, nationally and internationally – to be inventive and creative, to generate great opportunities and enable our students, colleagues and everyone whose lives we touch to make an impact.



From our origins in the Manchester Mechanics' Institution, founded in 1824, we have grown to become one of the largest providers of higher education in the country. Our 37,000, predominantly full-time undergraduates, are studying over 800 courses. They are accompanied by significant numbers of foundation year, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research and part-time students, and a fast-growing number of degree apprentices. The diversity of our students, and their different experiences and goals, enriches our provision and our community. We harness and direct their ambition, and seek to support and build vital connections between their aspirations and enthusiasm, and the vibrancy and energy of our city and our region.

One of our closest partners, working in active collaboration with us at all levels of our organisation, is the Students' Union (SU). This partnership is fundamental to our joint commitment to enhance the quality of learning opportunities for students, and SU representatives made an important contribution as members of the working

group that produced this Provider Statement.

This first Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) assessment comes at a time of significant change for Manchester Metropolitan. In 2015-16, following considerable consolidation of our physical estate, we re-organised our faculty structure, moving from eight faculties to six. Alongside these changes, we undertook a detailed review of our management structures to ensure that they provided us with the ability and dynamism to deliver our new vision and strategy. We established university-level committees in Education, Research and Knowledge Exchange, and Internationalisation, and appointed three Pro-Vice-Chancellors to provide the leadership needed for these strategically important areas. The new University Education Committee has been tasked with building on the strengths and achievements already highlighted by the TEF, and with delivering the innovation and consistent outcomes that will be necessary to secure the improvements that will make us sector-leading.

This context of significant change notwithstanding, Manchester Metropolitan has recorded improvements in a number of measures of quality during this TEF period of assessment. These include National Student Survey (NSS) data for Assessment and Feedback, Academic Support, Learning Resources, and Organisation and Management, together with information about the paths our graduates follow into employment and further study.

Students' overall satisfaction with their courses, as measured by the NSS, has remained stable, rising from 75% of students expressing satisfaction overall in 2011 to consistent figures in the mid-80% throughout this TEF period of assessment.

The proportion of Manchester Metropolitan graduates entering professional employment and/or graduate level study 6 months after graduation has increased from

60% in 2012-13 to 66.5% in 2014-15, as reported in the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey.

Data from the period used to inform the TEF capture the current trajectory of our journey, reflecting both the impact of recent improvements and the areas we will be targeting for positive flags in future assessments. This Provider Statement seeks to contextualise this statistical information, addressing differences between our core and split metrics. It will highlight our strategic approach to the three sections of the TEF: Teaching Quality, Learning Environment, and Student Outcomes and Learning Gain. It will give specific examples of innovation and excellence, including examples that reflect discipline-specific models and practices as well as those which have been, or are in the process of being, adapted or rolled-out to the University as a whole.

# Analysis of Metrics



## A) Core Metrics.

The robust teaching provision at Manchester Metropolitan is evidenced in the core metrics that inform the TEF; there were no negative flags for full-time students (92% of our population).

The picture was more variable with respect to our part-time students (8% of our population): we received double positive flags in the category of Highly Skilled Employment and Further Study, but a negative flag for Assessment and Feedback. Whilst numbers in this category are small, making it difficult to be definitive, our analysis suggests that the double positive flag relates to the concentration of part-time students in professional programmes in Health and Business Studies, and that our success in this area reflects the strong links these programmes have to our partners and employers. Our examination of students' open comments given in the NSS suggests that the negative flag for Assessment and Feedback might stem from part-time students in employment being less able to take advantage of face-to-face sessions for feedback. Following a pilot last year, we will be rolling out a system of recorded feedback, focusing on part-time courses as a priority, and will be evaluating the impact carefully to assess its success.



## B) Analysis of Differences between Core and Split Metrics.

Many of the split metrics contain students who report in multiple categories. That is to say, young Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) male students from disadvantaged backgrounds fall into four different sets of split metrics: 'young', 'BME', 'male', and 'disadvantaged background'. Students with these characteristics are more likely to be of the first generation in their family to undertake university education, to commute in to campus, and to have mixed entry/vocational qualifications, all factors which are not captured by the TEF assessment but which have the potential to make both higher education itself and progression to Highly Skilled Employment or Further Study more challenging.



While we have developed and continue to refine targeted support in some instances, our strategy has been deliberately focused on delivering an inclusive curriculum that supports all our students within a very diverse student population. We seek to make the higher education experience fit them, rather than making them fit higher education. A measure of our success in this approach is the fact that we have attracted very few flags on splits by student characteristics: only eight out of a possible 72.

We are committed to further developing teaching quality standards at the University to significantly improve against our sector averages, but have been reassured that there have been relatively few differences flagged in the metrics for different types of students, indicating that we are doing exceptionally well in providing an inclusive teaching environment for our diverse student body. Where specific issues have been flagged by the split metrics, we have investigated the context and have developed responses and actions where appropriate. These are summarised below.

### i) Other Undergraduate (UG).

Student numbers in the category 'Other UG' are extremely small, meaning that fluctuations in a single programme can deliver a flagged performance, as has occurred in the Teaching on My Course (double negative) and Academic Support categories (single negative). Our analysis suggests that these flags represent a very small number of students (130 over three years), concentrated in one programme: the Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care. This underwent a significant reduction in student satisfaction in 2014 for a variety of reasons, including disruption resulting from re-location of this programme to our new campus. A robust action plan was implemented, including staff development sessions, with the result that this dip lasted only one year, with the new cohort of students who did not experience this move expressing very high levels of satisfaction. Overall satisfaction returned to 94% in 2016, following the outlier of 48% in 2014.

Informed by this experience, we have adjusted our policies to ensure that any new development of our Estate, or similar major change programme, will always have a specific strand to consider the student experience during transition, and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education is a member of the Estates Strategy group.

#### **ii) Black and Minority Ethnic.**

BME results are above benchmark for NSS Assessment and Feedback and Academic Support and are particularly strong for Black students. The TEF assessment has, however, identified some concerns regarding this group's progression out of higher education: there are double negative flags for both the Employment or Further Study and the Highly Skilled Employment or Further Study categories.

There is sector-wide evidence that students from BME background do not progress as easily into employment as White students. This is reflected in sector benchmarks; the sector benchmark for progression to Employment is 84.7% for BME students compared with 93.3% for White students. For progression to Highly Skilled Employment it is 55.8% for BME students compared with 65.7% for White students. However, Manchester Metropolitan performs below the sector benchmark for these areas, so it has been important for us to attain a better understanding of the factors at play, and the interventions that might help.

There is evidence that the sector benchmarks mask significant regional differences, suggesting that there is also a geographical contributor to BME students' ability to progress into Employment or Further Study. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation investigated Occupational Segregation within BME groups in different English regions. In London, which has the largest proportion of the National BME population, there is low Occupational Segregation. In contrast, the boroughs of Greater Manchester – where the majority of our BME graduates remain following graduation – have some

of the highest levels of Occupational Segregation in England.

Our analysis of our under-sector performance in this area suggests that Further Study and Skilled Employment is a particular problem for young Asian males on our Business and Administrative Studies programmes (an area where young Asian females at Manchester Metropolitan outperform the sector), and that by targeting these programmes we may be able to make a significant difference to the outcomes for these young people. We are currently developing a HEFCE funded project in collaboration with the Universities of Manchester and Birmingham to apply targeted interventions for specific student groups within each institution, in partnership with their respective Students' Union. At Manchester Metropolitan, we have selected BME students in the Faculty of Business and Law as our target group, and will be developing tailored support for this group.

From our analysis of the BME issue, which revealed a link between progression to Employment and/or Further Study, and ethnicity, gender and location in some of the most deprived boroughs in Greater Manchester, it is unsurprising that negative flags are also present for Male and Disadvantaged students. We anticipate that the interventions to address these issues will have a positive impact on all three categories - BME, Male and Disadvantaged students - and will be of particular significance to students from a disadvantaged background, who may need encouragement and support in raising their employment aspirations.

#### **iii) Male.**

There is a double negative flag for male students in the highly skilled or further study metrics, which we will investigate further but believe may be linked to the BME male issue highlighted above. We believe that our increasingly proactive careers strategy will deliver improvement in this area, as will our participation in the HEFCE funded project.

#### **iv) Disadvantaged.**

Students from a disadvantaged background are less satisfied than are students from non-disadvantaged backgrounds with NSS Teaching Quality and Academic Support (single negative flag for both), though this is not a consistent pattern across the NSS scores in different Faculties. There is a double negative flag for disadvantaged students entering Highly-Skilled Employment.

We believe these challenges are linked to the issues already highlighted about the progression of certain students into Highly Skilled Employment. We discuss the measures we are taking in this area in the Employment and Employability section of this statement. We are confident that the more targeted, proactive careers interventions we are now making will be of particular benefit to disadvantaged students, who may need encouragement and support in raising their employment aspirations.

#### **v) Age.**

There is a single negative flag in this category for Teaching On My Course. The majority of our students are young students, and our analysis suggests that the changing entry qualifications of our student body, and in particular the growing numbers of students joining us with BTEC diplomas may be a factor here. In 2013-14, 29% of our students had vocational qualifications. This increased to 35% in 2014-15 and rose again to 37% in 2015-16. Between 2011 and 2013 we rolled out a revised curriculum framework, 'Enhancing Quality and Assessment for Learning' (EQAL) and while this led to significant improvements in the overall teaching and learning experience, we found that its structures were too rigid and were making it particularly difficult for non A-level students to adjust to university methods of teaching and learning. We updated EQAL regulations in October 2016 and are currently reviewing first year curricula to enable us more effectively to support the student journey from BTEC to university level teaching.

# Teaching Quality





### Student Engagement (TQ1)

The key to ensuring active student engagement lies with the involvement of students as co-creators of all aspects of their university experience. Student representation on the Board of Governors, Academic Board and the Education Committee ensures that the student voice is central to our mission and educational strategy. Our effort to ensure student engagement takes two forms: work that ensures the collective engagement of students in the development and delivery of their HE experience, and work that promotes and supports the engagement of students at an individual level with their programme of study.

#### i) Collective Engagement.

The SU takes an active approach to engagement with the educational mission of the University. SU-led campaigns have had tangible outcomes in addressing bunching of assessment dates, keeping Wednesday afternoons free from timetabled teaching to support sports and other extra-curricular activities and promoting a more student-friendly assessment feedback system. The SU compiles a termly 'Student Voice' report, which is formally considered by the University's Academic Board. Recent actions taken because of Student Voice reports include improvement of E-book provision in the library and the addition of SU advice centre contact details to student communications from the University. The SU takes responsibility and ownership for the student representative system, organising recruitment and training of student reps and providing support and resources. The system is very effective, demonstrating the high level of collective engagement on the part of our student body; in the academic year 2016-17 the Union trained a total of 1,163 student representatives, meaning there is currently one student representative for every 27 students at Manchester Metropolitan.

In 2014, we developed our strong partnership with the SU into a more

formal system to ensure collective student engagement in the development of the curriculum. We made it a requirement that an independent student representative be appointed to all new programme approval panels specifying that student representatives are independent of the course under review and are trained, paid and on full and equal terms with other panel members. This innovation ensures that students are fully involved in the design of curriculum and assessment.

Collective student engagement is also central to our online Continuous Monitoring and Improvement Dashboard (CMI) which enables continuous review of the quality of our courses and facilitates the rapid development of action plans in response to formal mechanisms of student feedback. The CMI Dashboard ensures the timely dissemination to unit leads and department heads of data from the National Student Survey (NSS) once a year, our internal Student Survey (ISS) twice a year, and the International Student Barometer (ISB), which we engage with in alternate years. Programme leads are responsible for developing and implementing dynamic action plans following the release of ISS and NSS results. If a programme falls below a subject threshold on NSS results it is subject to targeted programme intervention (TPI) which involves the support of another department head and student focus groups to develop action and communication plans, and to deliver significant improvement in response to collective student feedback. In the period 2013-15 ten programmes were in TPI, and the intervention resulted in an average 10% improvement in NSS scores. 'Closing the feedback loop' is vital in reporting back to students where we have made changes and improvements in response to their feedback, and also in explaining where and why changes are not possible, or are more long term. Methods of closing the feedback loop differ by programme, so that they are suitably tailored to specific characteristics of different





students. Recognising that for giving feedback to be seen as worthwhile, students must receive a timely and meaningful response, we have recently moved our schedule for response to the ISS forward to enable us to report back faster to students, and to secure the implementation of improvements and enhancements as soon as possible.

In addition to these structured, timetabled methods of student engagement, we utilise a range of other, more ad hoc, but equally important ways of gathering collective student feedback and improving communication at unit level. These methods include informal Staff-Student Liaison Committees, Student Fora, focus groups, Head of Unit meetings, and 'Town Hall' meetings for large cohorts. These methods for promoting student engagement have created a positive atmosphere of partnership. The SU's engagement with our educational mission is illustrated by the annual teaching awards that it initiated and runs to enable students to recognise and celebrate excellent teaching. Staff and departments are nominated by students, and the awards are judged by a panel of judges from the SU, the National Union of Students (NUS) and the University's Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). In 2015-16 a total of 1,100 students participated by nominating teachers, teams and departments for awards.

#### **ii) Individual Engagement.**

While fostering a collective sense of partnership with students, we are also at the forefront of developing approaches and technologies to promote student engagement on an individual level. In September 2015, a personalised Student Engagement Monitoring (SEM) Dashboard was launched to provide personal tutors with easy access to a number of indicators of the engagement of each individual tutee. These include engagement with Moodle (our virtual learning environment), submission of coursework, hand-in of assessment, and marks. We are currently in the process of adding attendance data to the dashboard for all students, and

are finalising a contract to deliver an attendance monitoring system (AMS), following a pilot scheme from 2014 to 2016 that provided compelling evidence on the link between attendance and student achievement. The pilot was substantial, involving over 6,000 students across all faculties, plus all Tier 4 international students. Our analysis showed significant improvements in student attainment as a result of the AMS intervention: students in the AMS pilot had a higher pass rate than students who were not in the pilot, and students who achieved the highest marks were generally shown to have higher attendance rates. The majority of students that were in the pilot in both 2014-15 and 2015-16 received fewer 'triggers' (meetings with support tutors or personal tutors following absences) in the second year than in the first, a sign that AMS had a positive impact on student attendance. 35% of students who were in the pilot in both years had better attendance in 2015-16 than in 2014-15, pointing to significant changes in student engagement because of monitoring partnered with effective support interventions. The dissemination of SEM data enables us to make early interventions to support students who might otherwise be at risk of non-continuation or low achievement. Our investment in an infrastructure for collecting data on individual student engagement has been matched with a commitment to facilitating and supporting that engagement, and to ensuring the integration of data-informed learning analytics with the support systems for personalised learning, welfare and the promotion of self-reflective independent learning described later in this statement.



## Valuing Teaching (TQ2)

Excellence in teaching practice lies at the heart of our educational strategy, and we have fostered an institutional culture at Manchester Metropolitan that values and promotes teaching in two ways. Firstly, we have invested in an infrastructure that supports our teaching staff to improve their teaching practice throughout their career, and rewards excellence in teaching as a high status activity that is fundamental to the mission of the University. Secondly, we actively promote the dissemination of teaching innovation throughout the University, ensuring that the intellectual research and curiosity that drives teaching excellence is embedded into our programmes.

### i) Supporting Teaching Staff.

Our Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching takes a leading role in supporting our teaching staff in developing their teaching practice. CELT is one of the larger education and academic development units in the UK, with 8.5 full-time-equivalent (FTE) academic staff and a further five support staff. When members of staff are appointed to teaching roles, including part-time associate lecturer roles, they undertake a needs analysis and are accordingly offered a range of options to support their teaching practice.

New permanent appointments who have a teaching role are expected to complete the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (PGCert) as a condition of their probation, and pay increments are awarded to staff on completion of the PGCert. 159 staff have completed the PGCert or its predecessor, the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) since 2013, with a further 237 currently enrolled on one of these courses.

As an accredited assessor for the national Higher Education Academy (HEA) Fellowship through taught and recognition routes, Manchester Metropolitan supports more experienced staff to apply for HEA status through internal recognition panels or through

accredited Continuous Professional Development (CPD). CELT provides support for advanced teaching qualifications, including Senior and Principal Fellow of the HEA, and National Teaching Fellow (NTF). We have seven NTFs across the institution, having secured accreditation for at least one, and sometimes two Fellows every year since 2011. We currently have 720 accredited members of the HEA (51 Associate Fellows, 597 Fellows, 64 Senior Fellows and eight Principal Fellows.) CELT has also been involved in the development of the standards for the national HE apprenticeship, which will be introduced in September 2017.

Peer observation of teaching is valued highly as a tool for CPD and, in line with our commitment to continuous improvement, we initiated a new approach to peer observation of teaching last year in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. We are currently rolling out the enhanced scheme throughout the University. Retaining the emphasis on peer support, we have improved our scheme through triangulated observations between early career, mid-career and senior staff. Reports from peer observation, including suggestions for CPD, are used in an individual's Personal Development Review (PDR) to ensure that teaching development is embedded in staff review processes. Excellence in teaching is clearly identified in the criteria used for promotion to Reader and Professor and we have a number of colleagues who have gained promotion through this route. We are currently modelling a system of mentoring for staff to support the teaching route to promotion.

### ii) Building a Culture of Teaching Innovation.

Self-reflective teaching practices and the importance of professional development, embedding pedagogical research and sharing best practice in learning and teaching are promoted by the structural presence of CELT expertise at multiple levels across the University, including university- and faculty-level Education Committees.

CELT plays a crucial role in supporting and disseminating creative and effective approaches to teaching and learning throughout the University and beyond through its own academic journal, Learning and Teaching in Action, and the monthly Learning and Teaching newsletter. The Festival of Learning and Teaching, which CELT runs every summer, showcases best practice and innovation. The CELT website hosts a 'Good Practice Exchange' which contains over a hundred multimedia case studies from all parts of the institution. In addition, CELT works to connect our staff to a wider network; we are a participant in 'Teaching and Learning Conversations' webinars, a cross-institutional collaboration among seven UK Higher Education Institutions which offers colleagues a platform to share their innovations and good practice with a wider audience, as well as participate in webinars with colleagues from other institutions. Our Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Fund supports up to 15 projects each year to deliver institution-wide impact and curriculum enrichment through scholarship, focused support for staff development, the development of innovative learning resources, enhanced student support, student progression and success, and the development of appropriate academic support for students. In order to ensure that teaching excellence is fully embedded into practice throughout the University every Faculty has at least two Senior Learning and Teaching Fellows (SLTF) and/or Principal Lecturers with a Learning and Teaching brief, who coordinate initiatives across departments. Some SLTFs focus on a specific aspect of learning and teaching such as technology enhanced learning, while others focus on staff development activities and events. All work closely with CELT to ensure the spread of innovative ideas and impactful pedagogy.



### Rigour and Stretch (TQ3)

Our programme design, approval and monitoring processes have been constructed to ensure that all programmes of study deliver high levels of rigour, and challenge students to produce their best work. CELT provides input at programme proposal stage, with guidance and a range of resources in relation to curriculum development, assessment and learning and teaching methodologies, and our Learning Innovation Team has input on the development of technology-enhanced learning and on-line delivery. All unit specifications require a specific allocation of student effort to be devoted to independent (student-centred) learning.



The rigour and stretch of our programmes is validated by student input (detailed above, 'Student Engagement (TQ1)'), employer involvement and external examiner engagement. Manchester Metropolitan has extensive links with local, national and international employers, who contribute to programmes, through varied mechanisms such as the provision of placements and work-based learning, internships, guest lectureships and use of industry briefs. Employers support the development of programmes, and analysis of employer feedback informs Programme Review. The University prides itself on offering a range of programmes informed by professional practice and external expertise, and recognised by professional bodies as providing the high standards of teaching required to secure professional accreditation. We have links with over 70 Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), and in 2016-17 we are running 152 accredited courses, meaning that a quarter of our Key Information Set (KIS) programmes meet the standards of excellence required to secure PSRB accreditation.

External examiners have an exceptionally detailed range of data on which to base their validation of the rigour and stretch of our

programmes. The access we provide to our CMI dashboard means that they can review up-to-date data on the health of the programme, including progression, achievement, graduate employment, previous levels of student achievement and previous examiners' recommendations and actions that ensued.

### Feedback (TQ4)

Feedback is an integral part of teaching excellence at Manchester Metropolitan, and assessment strategies form an important part of the approval processes for new programmes that staff, external advisors, employers and students all contribute to. Our strategy on Assessment and Feedback over this TEF period can usefully be divided into two sections: firstly our general approach and associated innovation, and secondly the modification of assessment strategies to deliver more personalised learning and support progression without diluting academic standards.

#### **i) Transforming Assessment and Feedback for Institutional Change (TRAFFIC).**

Part of a JISC Assessment and Feedback programme, TRAFFIC ran from 2011-2014, and delivered an impact on the TEF metrics for the period 2013-14 to 2015-16. Our NSS scores in this area rose from 63% in 2011 when the project started, to 71% in 2013 at the beginning of this TEF period and to 74% in 2016.

TRAFFIC reviewed institutional policies and processes associated with assessment and enabled us to make high-impact interventions through the use of technology to support enhancements and improve student learning, as well as promoting greater clarity for students on assessment criteria and ensuring institution-wide compliance with the four week return-of-assessed-work deadline. CELT wrote and managed an online course on Assessment in HE to support this project.

A measure of the success of



TRAFFIC is the fact that project outcomes have been taken forward by JISC as part of their electronic management of assessment strategy. While this University-wide project was instrumental in securing a step change in our approach to an improved assessment strategy, we have been careful to maintain the disciplinary specificity and local flexibility that produces appropriately targeted and innovative assessments. There are over 100 types of assignment in use in the institution, with discipline and skill specific assessment' being key to many professionally-focused programmes.



#### **ii) Assessment and Feedback and Personalised Learning.**

While TRAFFIC enabled us to deliver a significant step change in the way in which we enable and support students in engagement with assessment, over the past three years we have recognised the need to ensure that assessment structures enable students, rather than setting them up to fail. Our concern to support student progression and retention while maintaining high academic standards has resulted in meaningful changes to our patterns of assessment. These changes focus on two areas. Firstly, we have designed new processes to support students who have failed an assessment on their first attempt, putting them at a higher risk of not progressing in their course. In 2014-15 we piloted 'In-Year Assignment Recovery' (IYAR) for Level 4 students, who commenced study in September 2014. Students were permitted to undertake reassessment at an earlier point than usual in the academic year in order to reduce the burden of summer reassessment on them, and enable them to access academic support services and the advice of their academic tutors more easily. A wide range of targeted resources were made available to staff

and students to support the scheme.

Piloted over the last two years, IYAR has enabled 397 students to avoid August re-assessments at Level 4. A further 104 have reduced their August re-assessment burden by successfully engaging with the scheme. Whilst the nature of the scheme makes it hard to say definitively how many students have progressed directly because of IYAR, almost 400 students have not had to undertake summer reassessment as a result of the IYAR scheme, which has a positive impact on student confidence and retention. We have now extended the scheme to cover Level 3, and are embarking on a programme to encourage greater number of students to take advantage of IYAR. Following the success of the pilot, IYAR was incorporated within the Assessment Regulations for 2015-16 for all Level 4 Programmes.

Secondly, in October 2016 we made a further modification of assessment practice, introducing more flexibility into our systems to increase the number of permitted assessments per unit, and to allow an earlier assessment deadline for a piece of assessed work in the first term. This revision was in response to our realisation that existing structures of assessment were disadvantaging BTEC students, who needed a system of more staggered assessments of lesser weight to help with their transition to university-level assignments. The impact of this change will not be delivered within this TEF period, but we are confident it will support our retention and progression work in coming years.

# Learning Environment





### Resources (LE1)

HESA data show that our spend on academic resources has risen across the three years of the current TEF period, with spending per student FTE in academic departments rising from £3,853 to £4,324, on academic staff from £2,987 to £3,311 in the same period, and on academic services from £1,186 to £1,489. Our staff-student ratios have improved in the TEF period, from 17.7:1 in 2013-14 to 15.7:1 in 2015-16, enabling us to expand our provision of personal tutoring and student support. Our approach to the provision of resource to support student learning has been guided by our understanding of the needs of our diverse student body. The allocation of resource to support our learning environment is divided into three categories; estate, academic support and digital infrastructure.

#### i) Estate.

Our Estates strategy has been shaped by the need to create a supportive learning environment and a sense of belonging for all students. Over 75% of our Manchester-based students live more than five miles from campus, and over 20% live over 26 miles from campus. Our resource allocation seeks to support the engagement of these students through the provision of social space, specialist learning facilities and access to academic support. We recognise that where students have social learning space with dedicated and specialised equipment, they are more likely to stay on campus and to use time between timetabled classes pursuing independent study, developing their professional portfolio and working alongside colleagues, students and staff in a workshop setting. This approach has delivered improved student engagement and outcomes where it has been implemented, and it is at the heart of the next stage of our estates plan.

An example how this strategy has delivered successfully in practice is the Manchester School of Art's new home in the Benzie Building. As a university that hosts a globally leading architecture school, we were proud

to be awarded the RIBA North West Regional award for this building. Purpose-built, it was innovative in its provision of shared workshop space for programmes including Fine Art, Illustration, Animation, Design, Fashion, Textiles, and Architecture. The open plan workshop space facilitates interdisciplinary project working, and supports the development of professional skills and project-based learning. The design of the space contributed to an improvement in overall student satisfaction (from 70% in 2011-12 to 82% a year after the opening of the building in 2014) as well as qualitative comments that praised the provision of student-friendly access to interdisciplinary professional workspace. Following feedback we are currently extending the weekend opening hours of this facility.

The goal of the 'sticky campus' where the prevailing character of the space works to prompt students to learn and collaborate will be the driving force of the next stage of our estate investment. The first phase of our estates plan (2009-2016) saw a £350 million investment in buildings and facilities including a new £10 million home for the Students' Union. The next stage a further £400 million investment in our learning and teaching facilities is planned, including a screen school, learning and performance space for arts and media, radical improvements to the library, a rebuilt science and engineering building, and an investment in a Manchester base for sports and exercise science. All of these developments will be informed by the lessons learned from the success of the Benzie Building.

#### ii) Academic Support.

Student ownership and sense of 'home' in our buildings has been supported by our decision to ensure that access to resources around the broader student experience are local to student need. Our Student Hubs, introduced in 2012, provide students with frontline information, advice and guidance on a wide range of matters, including careers advice, financial guidance,





academic support services and welfare services. Their prominent location within Faculty space, rather than in a central University location provides clear and accessible service delivery, acknowledging the extent to which students identify with their Faculties as their home base. Opening times have been planned to meet the needs of a diverse student body. An Online Student Hub provides a similar range of information for students whose access to the physical campus is restricted. Academic support is also delivered through our highly responsive Library Service. Recent library enhancements include Sunday opening in the summer vacation, a new 'LibChat' service for online help, improved Library Search and touchscreen catalogue, improved power supply to student study desks and improved IT/AV equipment in rooms bookable by students.

Our extensive five-year investment programme in learning and teaching spaces, resources and digital infrastructure has been recognised by students, with a year-on-year increase in institutional NSS scores relating to Learning Resources, from 76% in 2011 to 85% in 2015. We have also invested in services that support student learning, directed both at improving key skills to support specific courses, improving generic academic skills, and finally building extracurricular skills such as foreign languages. The Writing Project aids students in written English skills. It has supported over 2,800 students in the last two years, and has had a significant impact on student confidence and engagement, scoring 4.08 out of 5 in our Internal Student Satisfaction survey.

We have been particularly pro-active in improving the numeracy skills of our students. We are one of 15 universities awarded funding (£1.5 million over five years) from the Nuffield Foundation, ESRC and HEFCE to establish a Q-Step centre to make a step change in quantitative social science training, and to support numeracy skills more widely. We have developed multiple ways of making this service accessible and student-friendly, with the result

that over 2,000 students have used it. Services include maths diagnostic assessments, numeracy support workshops, pop-up data labs and coaching from senior students, and data boot camps for dissertation support. Q-Step's Numeracy Project offers Maths Café drop-in sessions alongside bespoke sessions for specific programmes. The 'Numbers for Nurses' session 2014-15 saw a 100% pass rate for the nursing students who attended workshop, and a higher than average pass mark (94%) compared to the rest of the cohort (average pass mark 85%). In terms of overall performance of students who have engaged with the Numeracy Project, 100% of Level 4 students went on to pass all their units; 91% of Level 5 and 6 students passed all their units and 64% of Level 5 and 6 students saw an increase in their performance in comparison to the previous year.

### iii) Digital Infrastructure.

The strong commitment to partnership with students that runs through all aspects of our educational strategy has also influenced our investment in learning resources. Insights from focus groups, student representatives and systematic analysis of extensive student survey data have led to a number of major initiatives, including an online learning environment that provides a personalised, consistent and joined-up experience. The University introduced the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) in September 2011 and extended access to mobile devices the following year. We are currently in the process of tendering for lecture capture infrastructure to further support our current provision of podcasts and other teaching material. We see the purpose of the VLE as a complement to face-to-face delivery, and a key part of our blended approach to learning, teaching and assessment. Staff and students are encouraged to communicate, share key information and good practice via a range of online message boards hosted through Moodle. The mobile- and tablet-friendly Moodle site receives over 50 million hits a year and its positive contribution to the student experience was recognised in our student-led teaching awards.

# Student Outcomes and Learning Gain





## Employment and Further Study (SO1)

The University's performance in the DLHE survey has improved steadily, with the proportion of graduates going into graduate-level jobs rising from 58.7% in 2012-13 to 63% in 2013-14.

One of the difficulties that Manchester Metropolitan faces in improving employment outcomes is the very strong desire of many of our graduates to remain in this region. Highly Skilled Employment figures are very sensitive to the local economy; in 2016-17, the top 10 graduate employers in London collectively appointed 1,345 new graduates, while in the North-west the equivalent number was 295.

We have developed a very proactive careers service in order to ensure that our students have the skills necessary to compete in a challenging market. In September 2016 we initiated a new compulsory career questionnaire for all students on enrolment. This has already resulted in an increase in student enquiries to our careers service compared with the same point last year, with a 121% increase in enquiries to our employability hubs, a 69% increase in drop-in appointments, and a 23% increase in career interviews.

We will be using the data gathered through the questionnaire to reach out pro-actively to students, inviting them to events tailored to their interests. We also use our careers service to promote access to further study. The most recent DLHE data for 2014-15 show that 13% of our students progress into further study. Students considering further study have access to careers support in the form of physical and digital resources and one-to-one guidance with a member of staff. Data from start of year induction questionnaires has allowed us to be more proactive in contacting directly those students considering further study.

We are building courses that prepare students for employment through

bespoke programmes which link our UG provision with work experience and further study. Our innovative EdLab project enables students to work in interdisciplinary groups to earn credit for undertaking educational outreach activity that impacts directly on local communities. These students are supported in using that experience as a platform to develop their employability, both in terms of general entrepreneurial attributes and a direct pathway to initial teacher training (including a guaranteed PGCE interview). While the numbers on this scheme were too small to have had an impact during this last TEF period, we are currently expanding our provision, and providing bespoke versions of the project for different Faculties, and are confident that the scheme will grow in size during the next TEF period. In 2016-17 we have 115 students enrolled on this project (predominately Education Studies Students) From 2017-18, the departments of English and Sociology will adopt the units, with additional programmes taking up this provision from 2018-19.

Our Q-Step Numeracy Project also offers employability support, running workshops on how to pass the numeracy component of psychometric tests, together with research placements in organisations within Greater Manchester, and two-week tasters of our MSc in Quantitative Methods for final year undergraduates. To support students who are still seeking skilled employment after graduation we are launching a European Social Fund supported project to develop a PG certificate in Professional Development. This funded course will offer taught modules, work based learning and mentoring delivered by local employers and University alumni. There will be fifty places on the course this year, with planned expansion subject to satisfactory outcomes.

## Employability and Transferable Skills (SO2)

Our efforts to promote the employability of our graduates is inextricably linked to our efforts to embed employability and engagement with employers, professions and cultural and social partners into the curriculum. In 2013, we undertook a major review of our support for student employability and employment, resulting in the development and roll-out of the Employment, Employability and Enterprise (E3) Strategy. Our strategy can be divided into three sections; increasing access to work and international experience, fostering entrepreneurship, and recognising student attainment.

### i) Increasing Work and International Experience.

The number of Manchester Metropolitan students engaging in an international experience (study or work) has increased steadily over the TEF period from 194 in 2013-14 to 300 in 2015-16. Part of the remit of the new Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) appointed in September 2016 is to increase the number of international partners and to ensure that more of our students take advantage of international opportunities. We are particularly concerned to ensure that international experience is available to all our students; of the 300 students who had an international experience in 2015-16, 185 were supported by Erasmus+ funding, and 70% of these were from households with an annual income of £25,000 or less. We are equally concerned to increase the number of our students who undertake work experience as part of their higher education experience, and consider that it is particularly important that we offer this opportunity to students who lack the financial support and social capital to arrange their own placement opportunities. Across the University in 2016-17 over 6,000 students will take up placement opportunities, including over 3,500 mandatory placements within the Faculties of Health, Psychology and Social Care, and Education.

### ii) Fostering Entrepreneurship.

Our employability strategy seeks to support and encourage student innovation and entrepreneurship. While located in the Business School, our Institute Of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs Centre for Excellence (IOEE) supports the entrepreneurship needs of students across the University. Students on Tourism, Events, Hospitality, Business Management, International Business and M-Business programmes have access to IOEE accredited entrepreneurship professional certificates, and access to IOEE mentoring and resources.

Our innovative Innospace project was established to encourage and support Manchester Metropolitan student and graduate start-ups through the provision of enterprise and business advice. It aims to enable graduates to start profitable and sustainable businesses (including social enterprises), increase graduate career choices and retain talent in the local area; to be the recognised place where graduate entrepreneurs in Greater Manchester can pursue their business ideas as a career option, and to create a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. Innospace currently has 130 licensees in numerous sectors including fashion, technology, recruitment, letting agencies, digital, health, social enterprise, film and the creative arts. Its Business Start Up Boot Camp started in June 2012 and aimed to get businesses trading within six months. Boot Camp saw a 60-70% success rate and has worked with almost 300 new businesses.

Innospace facilitates crucial links between emerging businesses and our students; all Innospace companies provide mentoring, internships, project opportunities or other forms of support for Manchester Metropolitan students. A host of external organisations provide free advice and guidance through monthly workshops for Innospace businesses. Partners include Greater Manchester Business Growth Hub, UnLtd (social enterprise support),

solicitors, banks and our Careers and Employability Service.

Innospace's co-location with our 'Digital Innovation' Hub provides opportunities for the exchange of knowledge between graduate entrepreneurs, academics and businesses to inform the development of new digital ideas. Access to the latest digital expertise and related businesses can help increase the competitiveness of graduate start-ups. Digital Innovation has hosted 70 digital events with hundreds of businesses including; CISCO, BBC, Rullion, UK Fast, NHS, WebVM, Studio Liddell, Jist, Topspin, alongside student and graduate start-ups.

### iii) Recognising Student Attainment.

Our work to add value to the student experience outside the curriculum has focused on building a programme to encourage and recognise extra curricula work and skills development, and on increasing the international opportunities for our students. The Manchester Metropolitan Futures Award offers meaningful extracurricular opportunities, provides resources for students and the chance to have their achievements recognised by an award. The scheme offers recognition for the time students spend on extra-curricular activities, including acting as student representatives, hall representation, society membership, Peer Mentoring and membership of Programme Review panels. The Futures Award enables us to measure and record student progress and achievement in areas that fall outside the formal curriculum. Between 2013-2016 we made 171 awards on this scheme. In 2016 we revised the scheme and set more ambitious targets for student involvement; as a result we currently have over 550 participants registered on the Futures programme.



## Positive Outcomes For All (SO3)

As a university that puts Widening Participation (WP) at the heart of its mission, Manchester Metropolitan is committed to ensuring that all students are encouraged and supported to achieve at the highest levels. Our starting premise is that our education framework should be an inclusive one, which is accessible and inclusive to all our students, rather than one that necessitates a series of adaptations, special considerations or adjustments to fit the needs of particular student groups. Our policies are screened for Equality Impact, and academic staff and programme leaders are charged with ensuring that any modifications to the curriculum also undergo an Equality Impact Assessment. The Embedding Reasonable Adjustments in the Curriculum scheme (ERAC) is an example of inclusive curricula in practice. Through ERAC, we aim to provide learning support for students with mild to moderate Specific Learning Difficulties (including dyslexia) without the need for a formal Personal Learning Plan (PLP). The lecture capture policy which is currently in development is based on the principle of the inclusive curriculum; practices that benefit students with specific needs, such as the capture of lectures, should be provided as a routine practice to all students, rather than as a special provision that unnecessarily singles out a specific group.

While our teaching and learning practices and curriculum are designed to deliver an inclusive educational experience, we recognise the need to support specific groups beyond this. The Disability Service provides an impartial, high-quality service to prospective and current disabled students. A PLP is drawn up outlining recommended reasonable adjustments to minimise the impact of the student's disability on their study, where these go beyond the difficulties already considered in the ERAC scheme. Annually the number of students receiving a PLP has remained fairly

stable at just under a thousand students each year. The number of students accessing our Counselling, Health and Wellbeing service (CHWB), however, has increased from 1,255 in 2013-14 to 1,500 in 2015-16, with a significant increase in the level of severity of mental ill health. In response to this growing demand we have substantially increased the staffing levels in our CHWB service, adding a new Senior Counsellor post, three extra Counselling/CBT posts, five new Mental Health and Wellbeing posts and a new Drug and Alcohol Worker post in the last year. We have also invested in a new 'bank' system to draw down additional Counselling support at peak times and have developed a new Online CBT programme. We are confident that this investment will enable us to maintain our record in delivering consistent outcomes for all our students, regardless of additional needs. The University also runs a targeted Peer Mentor scheme for disabled learners (with current disabled students supporting the new students) which includes on-line support over the summer prior to entry, followed by face-to-face sessions.

A key focal point for supporting positive outcomes for all continues to be retention and progression. In our home full-time undergraduate population, 96% of our students are from state schools, and 19% were from low-participation neighbourhoods. Over 40% of our UG students are from households with incomes of less than £25,000, and we provided over £15 million in bursaries and financial support to WP students. Retention and progression is challenging for a university such as Manchester Metropolitan, since many students come from WP groups, and face a range of specific difficulties in pursuing Higher Education, including access to financial support, issues related to being among the first generation in their family to come to university, problems associated with commuting and vocational qualifications. Recognising that the first few weeks of the student experience are often difficult ones, we have improved support during induction. Following small scale pilots, an on-line Peer Support Scheme was introduced for all





new students in July 2016. The scheme involved all new undergraduates being invited to join a social media group where they could interact with each other as a way of building communities before they enrolled. The sites were managed by a team of student ambassadors who managed the communications and queries as well as updating students with key messages. Forty-three groups were set up, with a total membership of 5,776 students. Some Faculties used Peer Mentors to provide face-to-face support to these students during the first few weeks of term. These mentors (usually second year students from the same programme areas) provided campus orientation, advice and support informed by their own first year experiences. The Peer Mentors were also trained on the support available across the institution and were able to signpost students to the appropriate services. This activity will be evaluated during 2017 and will inform how the scheme is developed further for the 2017-18 cohort.



We have recognised that delivering improvements to induction is not just about supporting incoming students, but also about supporting staff in understanding how changes to educational practices and curricula in schools and FE colleges impact on the experiences of our new students in adjusting to university life. Induction into higher education (HE) is sometimes so focused on the HE context that it risks overlooking the effect of students' prior experiences of learning. Our Reciprocal Journeys project explored staff and student attitudes around the learning and teaching aspects of the students' successful transition to higher

education, asking how we can better support the increasing diversity of prior educational experiences of entrants. CELT produced a film with Xaverian 6th Form College in Manchester in April 2015, creating a space for staff at university and students at college to attain a better understand of the learning and teaching styles that they encounter and expect in their respective environments. We are currently using the film as a prompt to stimulate reflective thinking and dialogue around learning and teaching for students in transition.

Our WP mission is also supported by the provision of Foundation Year degrees, designed for students who have the ability to study for a degree but do not have the qualifications to enter directly onto an honours degree. The Foundation Year attracts students from non-traditional educational backgrounds and under-represented groups and provides additional entry routes to a significant proportion of undergraduate courses. Our commitment to this group of students reflects our WP commitment and our determination to improve access to all, but particularly to students drawn from our region who would not otherwise be able to access Higher Education. Throughout the period of the TEF assessment we have accepted around 1,000 students each year onto Foundation Year programmes. It is pleasing to note that the progression of these students to Level 4 has improved over these three years by over 5%, to 79%.

# Conclusion

It is fitting to end our Provider Statement with this reflection on the experience of Foundation Year students. Manchester Metropolitan, as our Provider Statement has illustrated, is a university with a determination to make excellent teaching available to all.

This statement has highlighted the ways in which we are seeking to ensure that the HE experience we provide is one in which all our students can thrive and succeed, not by adjusting themselves to rigid expectations and processes, but by embracing the different forms of disciplinary engagement and personalised educational support which we offer.

It is inevitable that in a university as large as ours, which offers such a broad range of programmes, some of the innovations outlined here are discipline specific.

Teaching excellence frequently emerges from discipline and practice specific experience, rather than from top-down directives. As this statement has demonstrated, however, our commitment at Manchester Metropolitan is to providing the support structures, learning environment, and academic culture in which teaching excellence can emerge and thrive, and, where

appropriate, be adapted and disseminated across the institution. The metrics that inform the TEF demonstrate the extent to which we are already succeeding in delivering the educational excellence to all our students.

This Provider Statement has highlighted the strategies and methods we used to deliver that excellence, and has contextualised our trajectory over the TEF period of assessment.

It has pointed to the projects that we are currently engaged with, not to highlight promises on which we have yet to deliver, but because this speaks to our understanding of excellence in education as a constantly evolving process, a permanent state of innovation and improvement.