

Teaching and Learning Policy

The Teaching and Learning Policy of The Leeds School of English is based on a range of key principles.

All teachers are expected to pay particular attention to these principles in their approaches to teaching and learning:

- The emphasis should be placed not on teaching but on the learning process, meeting students' needs, and the provision of diverse learning opportunities. The teacher is the facilitator of learning and should encourage learners to achieve their maximum outcomes.
- Teaching is regarded as the catalyst for the development of a range of skills and the encouragement of independent learning.
- Assessment is seen as an integral part of the teaching and learning process and particular weight is attached to the uses of formative assessment to raise academic standards and nurture students' self-confidence.
- There is an emphasis on the concept of active learning and the deployment of a broad range of teaching and learning strategies in recognition of students' diverse learning styles.
- High priority is also given to differentiation in approaches to teaching to ensure that these encompass students' diverse learning needs and abilities.
- Emphasis is placed also on the concept of personalised learning by encouraging students to self-assess through the use of needs analysis, tutorials and ILPs.

Good Practice

Effective good practice in teaching and learning involves:

- Maintaining demanding academic standards, enriching learning experiences and good outcomes in all learning and teaching activities.
- Providing a high quality learning environment for all students, with up-to-date technologies and access to a comprehensive range of learning materials.
- Fostering a commitment to quality improvement and making progress by encouraging students to participate in evaluations and feedback.
- Recognising the need not only for academic support for each student but also for the importance of their social, personal and career development.
- Striving to make best use of the resources available for learning and teaching.
- Ensuring that teaching, learning and assessment strategies are appropriate for the academic levels of the courses; that their integration effectively promotes students' academic progress; and that they are inclusive, enabling all learners, including those with a disability and/or learning support need, to achieve their academic potential.
- Challenging each student at their own level.

Syllabi

A syllabus is available for each course. Syllabi are subject to annual revision as part of the School's quality assurance and quality improvement model.

All syllabi have a necessary fluidity with sections being added and extracted as needs change. Teachers are expected to prepare Weekly plans in which they adapt the syllabus to the needs of the students in their class.

Lesson Plans

All teaching sessions are expected to be planned appropriately.

Weekly plans and lesson plans must be available for inspection if requested by the Academic Manager.

Weekly plans and lesson plans must be available during the class. A standard lesson plan template is available which all teaching staff are required to use for observed lessons.

By every Monday, teachers complete their draft weekly plans, which incorporate the following key elements as appropriate:

- links to the previous week's lessons
- learning aims and objectives
- learning strategies
- skills development
- resources required or to be accessed
- any significant differentiation
- assessment
- homework.

Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment)

Observation of teaching, learning and assessment is an essential aspect of The Leeds School of English's approach to course quality assurance.

It serves a number of purposes:

- a check on academic standards of teaching and learning;
- a gauge of the quality of the learners' learning experience;
- an opportunity to support the teacher in raising their professional standards by giving feedback and discussing development strategies and approaches.

Regular observations by the Academic Manager

Regular class observations are carried out by the Academic Manager. These observations focus on some or all of the following:

- coherence of approach to teaching, learning and assessment
- focus on learning
- clarity of lesson aims and objectives
- structure of lesson including introduction and conclusion / recapitulation or summative review
- links to previous work and scheme of work
- range of teaching and learning strategies deployed

- focus on skills development and learning outcomes
- learning environment and resources
- the teacher's rapport with the group
- pace of session
- differentiation
- content
- active learner participation
- questioning and task setting
- independent learning
- formative assessment
- evidence of learner enjoyment of session
- progress made
- attention to needs of learners with disabilities and/or learning support needs

Feedback is designed to provide support and encouragement for teachers, providing advice for further development and addressing areas of weakness.

Peer observations

Peer observations also take place to foster the continuing professional development of teacher. The Academic Manager regularly schedules peer observation for teachers and suggests focuses for these sessions. Feedback after peer observation sessions always takes place, where the observer reflects on what they have learned from the observed lessons, and may share any suggestions with the teacher delivering the observed lesson. The Academic Manager arranges for cover if this is necessary for peer observation to take place.

Assessment Policies

The Leeds School of English uses 3 main forms of assessment:

- Diagnostic Assessment is used during the learner induction programme to assist the academic staff in developing baseline academic profiles for each learner and to inform any additional support strategies.
- Formative Assessment has a developmental purpose. It is used by teachers to assist learners in learning more effectively by giving them feedback on their level of attainment on each piece of assessed work and guidance on how to improve.
- Summative Assessment occurs normally when a student completes a level, to gauge the extent to which a learner has attained the learning outcomes and language level of the programme.

Principles of Assessment

Assessment of learners' work is an essential aspect of the learning process.

For assessment to be effective, it should be based wherever feasible on the following principles:

- sufficiently regular to motivate and inspire learners but not overwhelm them;
- timely, constructive, accurate feedback;
- incorporates a range of methods which reflect different skills;
- valid i.e. relate closely to CEFR 'Can do' statements;
- based on clear and transparent criteria which the learner is aware of and understands;
- fair and reliable i.e. based on objective evidence and linked to the module/course criteria;
- inclusive in that it has sufficient flexibility to ensure that no learner is denied access to the assessment because of disability.

Learning Resources

In addition to the resources provided for learners in classes, The Leeds School of English is regularly investing in appropriate resources dependent upon learner numbers and individual course requirements.

The School's teachers encourage learners to make full use of virtual resources which complement course materials.

The Academic Manager regularly audits teaching materials and teachers are encouraged to submit requests for additional learning materials that they feel will be of benefit to the learners.

E-learning

E-learning platforms are used in most classes to complement learning in the classroom, and provide a framework for out-of-school work and assessment.

Teachers are required to be familiar with these platforms, introduce them in classes, and continuously monitor their use and encourage students to exploit them.

Curriculum and Skills Development Policies

The School's Curriculum details the basic aims of the range of courses on offer, while the Skills Development Policy sets out further areas of focus for skills development beyond the curriculum.