

Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy 2026

The Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy for York St John is intended to build on recent successes in indicators of the quality of our learning, teaching and assessment, including substantial improvements in NSS, and rises in both Guardian and Sunday Times league tables (including being ranked 10th in the country for Teaching Quality.)

This strategy applies to all those who study taught programmes with us. It is guided by a vision in which students acquire the knowledge and skills to succeed and enjoy the tangible and intangible benefits of higher education. It builds on the distinctive York St John experience valued by our students, who have a strong sense of belonging to a supportive and intellectually rigorous academic community with social justice at its heart. It draws widely on sector best practice and extends to our whole academic community the excellent practice found in each of our Schools.

In achieving this vision, the strategy aims to:

- establish a clear and consistent academic direction for the University
- effectively connect learning and teaching with contributing and connected University strategies
- achieve the KPIs in learning, teaching and assessment as identified in Strategy 2026:
 - Excellence in national teaching and learning benchmarks with positive metrics in satisfaction, retention, and outcomes for underrepresented Groups
 - 90% overall satisfaction in the NSS
 - Improve by 50 places in the Sunday Times' annual University Guide
 - 70% Graduate employment in professional / managerial roles each year

Learning and Teaching Strategic Objectives

At York St John University education is for the whole person. It leads to the acquisition of in-depth knowledge and subject-specific skills. At the same time, it develops intellectual capacity, practical skills, self-awareness, creativity, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, empathy and compassion. In establishing a consistent direction for all University Learning and Teaching the strategy will follow the following themes and objectives:

1. Education for Transformation. We are a transformative academic community creating success for every student.
 - 1.1 We will strengthen our genuine and extensive partnership with students
 - 1.2 We will adopt an impact-driven and data-informed approach to monitoring and review that enables a risk-based response and the continuous improvement of learning, teaching and assessment
 - 1.3 We will recognise and reward teaching excellence and enable our staff to develop their practice
 - 1.4 Our whole university approach to mental health will include sector best practice in relation to curriculum and learning, teaching and assessment
2. Education for all. We provide an inclusive and transformative experience creating opportunities for success for students from any background.
 - 2.1 Our learning, teaching and assessment practices will be inclusive by design
 - 2.2 We will underpin our provision with quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms that support the success of students from underrepresented backgrounds
3. Education for the Future. We equip students with the skills and knowledge to thrive in an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world.
 - 3.1 We will create programmes that provide excellent learning and teaching, informed by high quality research and characterised by support and intellectual rigour
 - 3.2 We will create a Student Development Portfolio to enable students to acquire and demonstrate the skills and attributes to thrive in an uncertain future
4. Education for the Wider World. We enable students to succeed in their chosen path and to address the global challenges facing society.
 - 4.1 Employability will be embedded in every level of every programme
 - 4.2 Our curricula will be developed in dialogue with external partners, industry, public bodies and civil society
 - 4.3 Assessment will be authentic, including tasks students may encounter in the workplace and which develop employability and transferable skills

Strategic Objective	Actions	Essential or Enhancement	Contributing Strategies	Measures of Success	Owner	Time
1. Education for Transformation						
1.1 We will strengthen our genuine and extensive partnership with students	Peer mentoring and Peer Assisted Study Sessions will be available for all new students	Essential	-	All first-year students allocated a peer mentor PASS Schemes operating in every programme Attrition below 6% (L4-7)	Schools L&T leads & LTC Schools	2020/21 School Pilots 2021/22, roll-out 2022/23 2021/22
	All curriculum design processes (validation and revalidation) will include meaningful partnership with students	Essential	-	Nature, extent and impact of student partnership evidenced in programme design narratives and commended in compliance or validation event reports.	Schools / Registry	2020/21
	Students will be full partners in the University's data-driven approach to improving learning, teaching and assessment.	Essential	-	SU Sabbatical Officers and Chairs play a key role in major committees (QSC, LTC) and in preparations for sector-wide provider and subject levels frameworks UKES 'Staff-student partnership' scores at 50% (national benchmark c.43%)	TESO, Schools, QSC, LTC	2020/21
	Students' voices will be heard and acted on in partnership	Essential	Student Life	Strong feedback from SU reps and student-staff engagement committees UKES 'Staff-student partnership' scores at 50% (national benchmark c.43%) SVR, UKES and PTES participation rates at minimum 60% National Student Survey participation rates at minimum 75% Overall satisfaction at minimum 90%	Schools, Student Life, LTC	2020/21

	<p>We will establish a smooth and supportive transition into Higher Education, through programmes, and progression into employment and further study.</p> <p>We will create enhanced pre-arrival information and induction events for international students</p>	Essential	Student Life, International	<p>Attrition below 6%</p> <p>Reduction of progression gaps (APP)</p> <p>International Student Barometer</p>	<p>Schools, Student Life, YSJI</p>	<p>2026</p> <p>2025</p> <p>2020/21</p>
	Where possible, programmes will include co-creation / co-production opportunities	Enhancement	-	Co-creation / co-production activities taking place in programmes. Best practice shared across the University	Schools, LTC	Through validation cycle
1.2 We will adopt an impact-driven and data-informed approach to monitoring and review that enables a risk-based response and the continuous improvement of learning, teaching and assessment	NSS action planning will take place for every subject by August	Essential	-	1-page action plans for each subject developed within one month of publication of results to feed into annual monitoring	Schools, LTC, QSC	2019/20
	Annual monitoring processes will be focussed on performance data (quantitative and qualitative) including split metrics and include robust demonstration of evidence of the impact of strategic actions.	Essential	APP	Feedback from LTC and QSC recognises rigorous use of quantitative and qualitative performance data in annual monitoring	Schools, Registry, LTC, QSC	2020/21
	We will implement impact-driven and data-informed processes for periodic review incorporating school dashboards, including trend analysis of split metrics on access, continuation, attainment, and progression.	Essential	APP	Creation of School dashboards	S&P, Registry	2020/21
	We will create an evaluation and improvement cycle for continuous improvement	Essential	-	Improvement cycle in operation, making full use of mid- and end of module review data, student-staff engagement committee feedback etc.	LTC, QSC	2020/21
	All programmes will be benchmarked against sector data (KIS) to ensure contact hours are competitive and appropriate to support the success of students	Essential	-	KIS data included in programme development considerations	Schools, Registry, QSC	<p>Review 2020/21</p> <p>Implement from 2021/22</p>
1.3 We will recognise and reward teaching excellence and	We will develop a career progression route focussed on teaching excellence	Essential	People & Culture, Equality, Diversity, HR	Career pathway and promotion criteria approved	EB, HR, HoS, UCU	<p>Develop 2020/21</p> <p>Launch 2021/22</p>

enable our staff to develop their practice	We will develop a programme of CPD events sharing best practice in learning, teaching and assessment from within the University and across the sector	Essential	-	Programme published and events running	TESO, L&T Leads	2020/21
	We will replace Peer Supported Review of Learning and Teaching with 'Learning and Teaching Partnerships' to provide informal peer support and observation across all elements of the operation of/contribution to a module from design to delivery and assessment.	Essential	-	100% participation in Learning and Teaching Partnerships	LTC, L&T leads	2020/21
	We will establish and enhance the digital capabilities of academic staff. We will create training in a suite of models of digital/ blended delivery (SCALE-UP, flipped classroom etc)	Essential	Digital	Digital/online training launched Established models of digital / blended delivery in operation	TEL, Digital Training	2020/21 2021/22
	Academic and personal tutors and non-academic support staff will be provided with opportunities for training in coaching skills.	Enhancement	Equality, Diversity, HR	Training provided. N.B Coaching is not counselling and does not replace the need for referral to wellbeing for professional support.	HR, colleagues with experience of delivering training in coaching	2021/22
	We will increase the number of staff with Senior or Principal Fellowship of the HEA, National Teaching Fellowships and Collaborative Awards in Teaching Excellence.	Enhancement	-	100% of staff involved in teaching hold FHEA (GTAs minimum AFHEA) 20% teaching staff hold higher levels of fellowship/awards	Schools, TESO	2022/23 2023/24

<p>1.4</p> <p>Our whole university approach to mental health will include sector best practice in relation to curriculum and learning, teaching and assessment</p>	<p>Given the close connection between mental health and engagement and success in learning and assessment, we will implement the UUK Stepchange Framework on student mental health with an immediate focus on embedding principles of good practice in curriculum design and pedagogic practice</p>	<p>Essential</p>	<p>Student Life strategy to articulate full scope of whole university approach to mental health</p>	<p>A Whole University approach to mental health will entail a variety of actions and responsibilities across the full University community. Below are a few aspects of this which inform the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy:</p> <p>Revised transition programme</p> <p>Curriculum and pedagogy are designed to facilitate students to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at an appropriate pace.</p> <p>Wellbeing to provide materials to be embedded in Academic and Personal tutorials through a Student Development Portfolio.</p> <p>Attrition at 6% or below</p>	<p>Student Life, Schools</p>	<p>2021/22</p> <p>2021/22</p> <p>2021/22</p> <p>2026</p>
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2. Education for All						
2.1 Our learning, teaching and assessment practices will be inclusive by design	We will decolonise our curricula to increase representation of scholarship from across cultures and diverse experiences and perspectives	Essential	Race Equality Task Force report, APP, Student Life	Decolonisation working group established and reporting Membership of the Race Equality Charter Research collaborations with student partners (Students as researchers or brief internships) e.g. impact of decolonisation on student experience – applying NERUPI framework Bronze award on Race Equality Charter Improved BAME recruitment, retention and attainment 10% (combined) BAME staff and students	Schools, Student Life, registry, LTC	2020/21 2020/21 2022/23 2022/23 2026 2026
	We will ensure our students' experiences embody the University's commitment to equality, diversity and human rights. We will be at the forefront of eliminating inequalities in higher education in relation to, for example, disability, gender, race or ethnicity, or socio-economic status.	Essential	APP	Positive metrics in satisfaction, retention, and outcomes for underrepresented groups Research collaborations with student partners (Students as researchers or brief internships) e.g. impact of adoption of anonymous marking.	APP group, S&P, Schools	2025
	All digital materials supporting teaching and learning will be fully compliant with Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations (2018)	Essential	Digital	Accessibility (e.g. Moodle Ally) reports checked as part of Learning and Teaching Partnerships.	Schools, TEL	2020/21

	<p>We will establish baseline expectations for provision of teaching materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicative content for each session will be outlined on VLE at the start of the module Teaching aids (e.g., slides) shall be made available to students at least 2 working days in advance of the teaching session 	Essential	-	<p>Regular monitoring of VLE usage statistics to establish students' use of materials provided</p> <p>Improved feedback in SVR, UKES, NSS and PTES open comments</p>	Schools, L&T Leads, LTC	2020/21
	We will adopt anonymous marking practices wherever assessment type permits, and consistent with best practice in provision of personalised (preferably de-anonymised) developmental feedback.	Essential	Race Equality Task Force report	<p>SVR, UKES, NSS and PTES scores on feedback and fairness of marking at 90%.</p> <p>Sustained reductions in attainment gaps.</p>	Schools, Registry, LTC, QSC	<p>Pilot 2020/21 (Sem 2)</p> <p>Roll out 2021/22</p>
	Wherever possible, marking of written assessments submitted online to include originality report and similarity index.	Essential	Digital	<p>Marking taking place either within established originality checking/plagiarism prevention service(e.g. Turnitin) or using Moodle plug-in</p> <p>Increased uptake of TEL training on relevant services and platforms</p> <p>Reduced incidence of academic misconduct</p>	Schools, TEL, Casework	<p>2020/21</p> <p>2021/22</p> <p>2021/22</p>
	Where appropriate we will ensure a digital element in each year of every programme.	Enhancement	Digital	Online or blended approaches, using approved and supported tools, integrated into programme delivery wherever possible and in line with professional accreditations etc.	Schools, Registry, TEL, digital trainers	Through validation cycle

	Wherever possible, compulsory set readings will be available without cost to students	Enhancement	Student Life	SVR, UKES, NSS, PTES Learning Resources satisfaction at 90%, Improved measures of student perception of value for money To avoid hidden course costs, where programmes require students to acquire their own copies of texts, the costs will be communicated clearly in advance.	Student Life, Schools	2022/23
2.2 We will underpin our provision with quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms that support the success of students from underrepresented backgrounds and ensure an inclusive curriculum.	Split metric equality analysis of student attainment will be considered at School Assessment Boards and Progress and Award Examination Panel	Essential	APP	Revised SAB and PAEP data Significantly reduced attainment gaps for all underrepresented groups	Schools, Registry	2020/21 2025
	We will reduce the complexity of programmes and structure module choice to ensure an equitable and stable timetable	Essential	Student Life	Choice structured through validation and programme amendment. Satisfaction with timetable at over 80%, UKES, NSS (q.16), PTES Attrition below 6%	TIPB, Schools, Registry	Through validation cycle 2022/23 2026
	We will ensure teaching takes place across all teaching weeks in the academic year to establish a balanced overall workload (including placements where in teaching weeks) for students, and effective use of our estate.	Essential	Student Life	Space utilisation rates at or above sector median, including teaching after Easter break	Schools, Student Life	2021/22
	Where possible and desirable, we will provide a supported choice of assessment formats and types.	Enhancement	-	Choice of assessment types offered to students with guidance from academic and module tutors. This will only be offered in cases where consistency of quality and standards can be clearly demonstrated	Schools, TESO, Registry, QSC	Through validation cycle

3. Education for the Future						
3.1 We will create programmes that provide excellent learning and teaching, informed by high quality research and characterised by support and intellectual rigour	Wherever possible, programmes will include content directly related to high quality research outputs from staff. Research may inform module content and/or learning and teaching practice based on outputs in pedagogic research	Essential	Research	Nature, extent and impact of research on teaching evidenced in programme design narratives and commended in compliance or validation event reports. (curriculum and professional accreditation permitting) Positive feedback on research informed teaching in SVR, UKES, NSS, PTES open comments UKES scores for 'Engagement with Research and Enquiry' at 70% (national benchmark 66%)	Schools, Research Office	Through validation cycle
	To ensure undergraduate students are exposed to high-quality research all staff on academic contracts including all professors will contribute to undergraduate teaching (nature and extent determined at School level).	Essential	-	100% of staff on academic contracts making a contribution to undergraduate teaching	Schools, HR	2020/21
	Clear and consistent assessment marking criteria will be provided to students at the start of each module. Assessment criteria will be developed for each subject and assessment type, underpinned by revised Generic Assessment Descriptors to ensure consistency.	Essential	-	GAD reviewed ensure clarity and parity with sector norms SQP approval of assessment type marking criteria Satisfaction at over 80% on all questions regarding clarity of expectations of assessment in SVR, UKES, NSS (qs.8&9 – sector average 73% 2019) and PTES	LTC, TESO and QSC SQPs	Sem 1 2020/21 2020/21
	Assessment feedback will be targeted to develop students' knowledge, skills and understanding. It will include feedback identifying what the student has done well and 'feed forward' providing constructive guidance on how to do better. This will be clearly aligned to marking criteria.	Essential	-	Satisfaction at over 80% on all questions in assessment and feedback domain in SVR, UKES, NSS (sector average 73% 2019) and PTES	Schools	2021/22

3.2 We will create a Student Development Portfolio to enable students to acquire and demonstrate the skills and attributes to thrive in an uncertain future	We will develop a consistent programme of academic and module tutorials to support development and articulation of academic skills. To include guidance on modules (delivered by module tutors) and action plans created in reference to assessment feedback. Tutorials will draw on careers/employability and Wellbeing / Mental Health programmes developed in partnership with Student Life.	Essential	Student Life	<p>All students allocated academic groups and personal tutors before arrival</p> <p>Normally a minimum of 5 group tutorials (academic and module tutorials) per semester</p> <p>Normally a minimum of 2 individual academic tutorials per semester</p> <p>Guidance provided on the scope and limits of academics' role in integrating mental health into the curriculum.</p> <p>Increased engagement with ASCEND</p>	Schools, Student Life, LTC	<p>2020/21</p> <p>Schools develop interim schedule 2020/21</p> <p>LTC develops SDP 2020/21 for pilot 2021/22</p> <p>2020/21</p> <p>2021/22</p>
	Our statement on 'graduate attributes' will be revised to create a skills and attributes framework, enabling students to articulate and evidence their acquisition of skills and attributes in demand from employers and needed to contribute to a more ecologically and socially just society.	Essential	Student Life	<p>Skills and attributes framework developed and integrated into Personal Tutorials.</p> <p>Increased engagement with ASCEND</p>	LTC, QSC	<p>Develop 2020/21</p> <p>Roll out 2021/22</p>

4. Education for the Wider World						
4.1 Employability will be embedded in every level of every programme	We will create an 'Employability Passport' recording activities and experience valued by employers. This will be integrated into Student Development Portfolio	Essential	Student Life	Increased engagement with ASCEND 70% Graduate employment in professional / managerial roles each year	Schools, Student Life, LTC,	2021/22 2026
	Every programme will have employability built in and explicit at every level. This may include skills development, module content, placements, guest speakers etc.	Essential	Student Life	Schools will review current curricula to map employability at every level and make minor amendments where necessary Employability sections of design narrative and programme specification expanded, receiving commendation in compliance or validation event reports	Associate Heads, L&T Leads, SQP Registry, Student Life	Review 2020/21 Through validation cycle
4.2 Our curricula will be developed in dialogue with external partners, industry, public bodies and civil society	Programme development will include robust engagement with external partners wherever possible	Essential	Partnership	Commendation in compliance or validation event reports, EE reports 70% Graduate employment in professional / managerial roles each year	Schools, Registry	Through validation cycle
	Professional accreditation of programmes will be sought wherever possible	Essential	Partnership	Commendation in compliance or validation event reports, EE reports 70% Graduate employment in professional / managerial roles each year	Schools, Registry	Through validation cycle
	Industry experience and placements will be built in to programmes wherever possible	Essential	Clear About Career, Student Life	Commendation in compliance or validation event reports, EE reports Positive feedback on employability provision and 'career readiness' in SVR, and in UKES, NSS, PTES open comments 70% Graduate employment in professional / managerial roles each year	Schools, Registry, Student Life	Through validation cycle

	We will embed ecological and social justice, including UN Sustainable Development Goals into our curricula and practice of learning, teaching and assessment wherever possible	Essential	Sustainability	Commendation in compliance or validation event reports, EE reports. Positive feedback in SVR, UKES, NSS, PTES open comments	Schools, Registry, LTC	Through SQP & PASP schedule and validation cycle
	Programmes will include an international dimension wherever possible	Essential	International	Commendation in compliance or validation event reports, EE reports. Positive feedback in SVR, UKES, NSS, PTES open comments	Schools, Registry, YSJI	Through validation cycle
4.3 Assessment will be authentic, including tasks students may encounter in the workplace and which develop employability and transferable skills	All programmes will review their current assessment practice against the new University Principles of Assessment to ensure each programme includes a substantial proportion of assessment that is 'authentic' - that is similar to tasks students would encounter in the workplace and which will develop employability and transferable skills.	Essential	-	Commendation in compliance or validation event reports, EE reports. Satisfaction at over 80% on all questions in assessment and feedback domain in SVR, UKES, NSS and PTES Schools to review current curricula to map assessment to principles of assessment and make minor amendments where necessary Assessment sections of design narrative and programme specification expanded	Associate Heads, L&T Leads, SQPs, Registry, LTC	Review 2020/21 Through validation cycle
	Students will receive feedback early in each semester. Formative assessment loads to be carefully planned across modules to avoid unnecessary duplication and increased workloads. Deadlines to be staggered to permit feedback from formative and/or first summative assessment to inform subsequent assessments.	Essential	-	Satisfaction at over 80% on all questions in assessment and feedback domain in SVR, UKES, NSS and PTES Marking turnaround 15 working days	Associate Heads, Course Leads, L&T Leads, SQPs	2020/21

Key of Acronyms

APP – Access and Participation Plan
EE – External Examiners
GAD – Generic Assessment Descriptor
HoS – Heads of School
HR – Human Resources
ISB – International Student Barometer
KIS – Key Information Set data
LTC – Learning and Teaching Committee
NSS – National Student Survey
PAEP – Programme and Award Examination Panel
PASP – Programme Amendment Scrutiny Panel
QSC – Quality and Standards Committee
S&P – Strategy and Planning
SAB – School Assessment Board
SU – York St John University Students' Union
SQP – School Quality Panel
SVR – Student Voice End of Semester Review
TEL – Technology Enhanced Learning
TESO – Teaching Excellence Support Office
TIPB – Timetable Improvement Project Board
UKES – United Kingdom Engagement Survey
VLE – Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle)
YSJI – York St John International