Name of provider: University of Salford
UKPRN: 10007156

Provider submission

1 Introduction

In 2016, in collaboration with our staff, students and industry partners, we released our ten-year institutional strategy. Our strategy enacted a step change in our work as an institution, recasting our industrial heritage and the practical, technical and professional education and research we undertake into a relevant, future-facing iteration – our Industry Collaboration Zones (ICZs). The differentiating strategic concept of our ICZs effectively positions us as an anchor institution in our community and regional economy, ready to engage with the challenges and opportunities of Greater Manchester devolution, the Government Industrial Strategy and the wider global issues we face. Our ICZs build on our strengths in teaching and research to act as a focus for collaboration and co-creation between our staff, students and partners. This enables us to creatively repurpose, reinvent and develop practices across disciplines, fusing together industry engagement, innovation in teaching and learning and application of real-world research. Together these changes realise our student-centric mission: 'By pioneering exceptional industry partnerships we will lead the way in real world experiences that prepare our students for life.' As we tell the world, we enable our students to #becomeunstoppable.

1.1 Salford Curriculum response to the ICZs

The 'golden thread' of our ICZs has led us to be bold with the strategic direction of teaching and learning. With our students at the heart of our ICZ vision, we have taken a deliberate approach to instigating and sustaining a material tep-change in teaching and learning practice across the university, which challenges our students and stretches them in real world scenarios to achieve excellent outcomes that are valued by employers.

To deliver an academic portfolio that is 'ICZ-ready', we have built upon established practice in our Part-Time provision, which has always been extensively co-designed with industry, and achieves a '++ flag' for employability. Our programmes are co-created by employers, students and staff, using ICZ principles to systematically develop the underpinning pedagogical philosophy, and teaching and learning practices. This approach embeds the interdisciplinary purpose and character of the ICZs at the frontline of the student experience, helping students actively and knowingly position themselves in a global context as highly valued resilient, professional graduates.

Positive movement in our student outcome data over this TEF period demonstrates the early impact of this work with employment or further study rising by 5.8 percentage points and highly skilled employment rising by 12.7 percentage points.

1.2 Our Students

Our provision and pedagogy are informed by a nuanced understanding of our students and their needs. Salford students generally have to overcome more barriers before realising their full potential as compared to those from more advantaged backgrounds. At 42% of our overall population, the University has a relatively high proportion of students from Widening Participation backgrounds. Two thirds of our students come from areas with low-medium participation in HE. On entry, 45% of our students hold low or medium tariff qualifications. Our students' social capital is modest on entry, so our role is not just enabling educational attainment but also to develop our students' personal and professional skills.

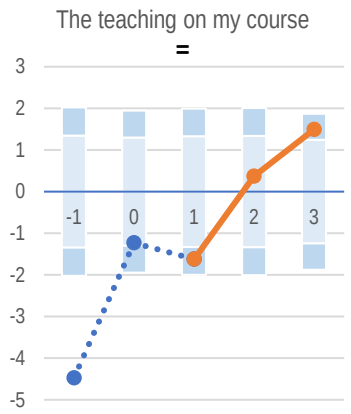
Despite the improvements we have realised in highly skilled employment, (in particular, the improved performance in the two most recent cycles covered by the data), we recognise we have further to travel in our performance as it is reflected in these historical data. However, as we enter the third year of enacting our strategy, we feel justifiably proud that the developments and innovations described in this document (some of which have been recognised previously as positively impactful in earlier submissions) have already led to a step-change in the lived experience of our current students and their outcomes. We are confident that the changes our strategy has delivered are resulting in a materially different experience for our current students in comparison to that suggested by the initial hypothesis arising from in the trailing markers in the data set accompanying this submission.

1.3 Submission structure

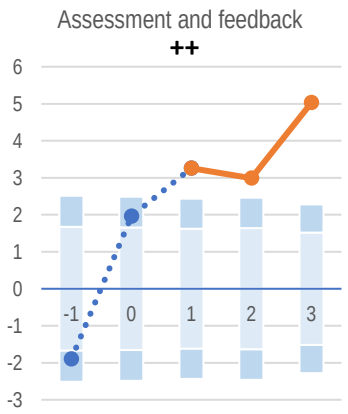
This document aligns itself with the three aspects of quality. Through this framework we broadly use the STAR approach (Situation, Task, Action and Result) to describe how our strategy has designed what and how we teach, and to highlight developments in our learning environment which are helping us to achieve our goal of 'preparing our students for life'.

2 Building on our excellent performance

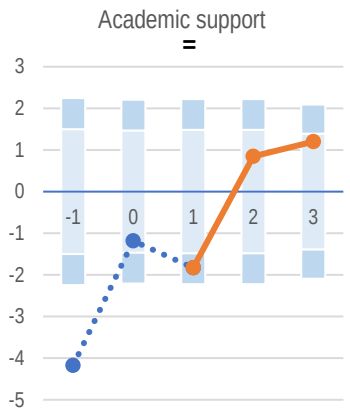
The following graphs, which show our difference from benchmark[1] for each of the core metrics, underline the impact our initiatives are having on successive cohorts of students.



The re-framing of teaching within real-world experiences has had a significant impact on our students' appreciation of teaching (section 4).



Assessment success is underpinned by authentic assessment, where students see links to real world problems and can appreciate the skills gained (section 4.5).



Our students receive tailored support from people who know them and understand their needs (section 5.3).

In each area we are proud to see the demonstrable success of our initiatives on our students' experiences. When seen and understood alongside our internal data and those quantifiable impacts which provide a leading indication of student attainment and outcomes, we are confident that these high levels of satisfaction with Teaching, Assessment and Student Support serve as reliable leading indicators for our improving student outcomes.

[1] The shaded bars show the range for up to ±2 standard errors, and then up to ±3 standard errors.

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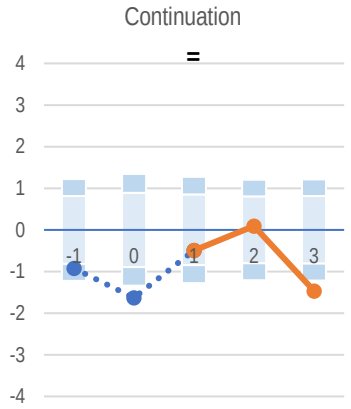

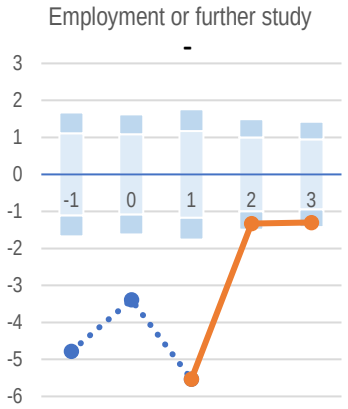

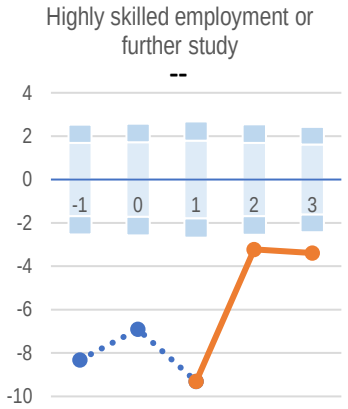

Over 52% of our students commute from home and remain attached to their local community. We know from exit interviews that fully engaging is difficult for some of these students due to other commitments. We are addressing this by investing in the physical estate to create spaces to encourage students to remain on campus outside of scheduled learning sessions and our pedagogy to support an accessible approach for all (section 0).

We made a huge change to our students' outcomes by focussing on creating and delivering an ICZ-ready curriculum, coupled with proactive interventions to support positive outcomes for all, in particular our students with disabilities, from BME backgrounds or commuting. In comparison to those students surveyed for these results, our recent and current students encounter a significantly different Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Feedback experience set within a learning environment which continues to develop at pace. For employment & further study, our last two years show that the difference from benchmark is less than 2% and outwith the TEF method's materiality, whilst our Part-Time students achieve above benchmark outcomes. Given our wider suite of quantifiable improvements and our holistic approach to educating our students, we fully expect to see the impact of these changes in our future results.

Our performance in Teaching, Assessment and Student Support show the significant gains we have made to drive improvements to our students' outcomes, particularly in employability, which sits at the heart of our strategy.

3 Comment from the Students' Union

This is now our third contribution to the university's TEF submissions. In our previous comments we have consistently stated that the metrics of the TEF do not adequately capture the diversity of our student body nor do the data present an accurate picture of the current experiences of students at the University. We are pleased that the university have acknowledged this in their submission.

While we disagree with the methodology of the TEF, we are fully supportive of the university's wider approach to improving the educational experience at Salford. Specifically, those of "tailoring experiences to our students' specific needs" and ensuring we have "shared goals with students as partners."

Our Sabbatical Officers and School Representatives work closely with the university to ensure that it is delivering on its ambitious commitments to students and constructively challenge the university to go further. Over the past several years we have made great strides to deepen the high-level partnership working between students and university, for example student representatives are now part of agenda-setting meetings for key committees and our officers have briefings from the Registrar before University Council.

To further embed this work throughout the institution, we have conducted a comprehensive review of how students are represented on their programmes and within their schools. This has seen a re-commitment from the University and the Union to working together in partnership with students. As the recommendations of the review are rolled out this will see more tailored representation structures within each school and a move away from a one size fits all approach. This ensures that the student voice is integrated at every level of the university from individual programmes through to University Council.

The Union is moving beyond simply holding the institution accountable and is now working collaboratively to tackle inequalities and barriers to educational success. We are now leading on institution wide work streams aimed at tackling bullying and sexual harassment, improving student safety in the local community and combatting the BAME attainment gap.

We have pioneered new approaches to improving student mental health through our “Rafiki” service which sees student volunteers trained by the Samaritans providing drop in support and signposting for students experiencing low-level mental health issues. These projects combined with our halls of residence support project “Denizen” show how we are working to ensure a holistic approach to removing barriers and ensuring students can succeed academically.

In the past year we have made new strategic investments in our volunteering provision to provide quality opportunities for students to improve their employability skills as well as provide accreditation to allow students to evidence the skills gained to employers. We look forward to building on this strategic commitment with the University.

4 A clear focus on teaching quality

Pursuit of our ICZ agenda has fundamentally changed our students’ experience of University. In practice, Teaching Excellence for Salford means high quality, relevant programmes which are highly valued by employers and which are co-created with industry and students. This co-production is combined with a personalised approach to learning which encourages students to actively engage in co-producing their outcomes, and the excellent education our students receive is tailored to stimulate and stretch, resulting in their being propelled onto their chosen career pathway. Recognising the ICZ strategy as a long-term transformation of our operating architecture, initial development of the learning experience was delivered to all our taught programmes during 2016/17 and 2017/18.

4.1 Engaging our students in their learning experience (TQ1)

Key to the successful engagement of students in their learning is our understanding of our student body. Just over half (52%) of our UG students commute into University. Nearly two thirds come from more disadvantaged backgrounds, and almost half have vocationally focussed, BTEC qualifications, gained in learning environments quite different from University. Recognising the intersectionality of issues shared between these characteristics, we designed the student journey and its environment to stimulate and stretch students, directing resources to make the biggest difference to their future success.

4.1.1 First contact: Laying the foundations for success (TQ1 & SO3)

We are successful at fostering early active engagement through our course materials, encouraging our potential students to #becomeunstoppable. Against a tough external landscape, programmes at Salford have demonstrated their consistent appeal with acceptances rising from 15.8% in 2016 to 19% in 2018 as our ICZ strategy has become established. Following on from this, our approach to induction into university secures high levels of engagement and commitment to learning from students. Our goal is learner autonomy, a trait highly valued by employers and critical to academic success. Differentiated

induction activities are held for our mature, part-time and students on employer linked programmes (e.g. degree apprenticeships). Incoming students are given access to our Skills for Learning resources which, along with programme specific pre-arrival tasks, encourage students to engage with self-reflective and online packages that help build understanding of what it means to study in an ICZ-ready learning environment. More than 1,800 students (around 40% of the cohort) engaged with the programme during September 2018. Of those who completed pre- and post-programme assessments, 85% showed enhanced confidence in their study skills. Over 90% of those who engaged with the programme reported that it had changed the way they approach their studies.

Crucially, our engagement strategies position students as partners in co-creating their journey. In 2015, we worked widely with students who told us that they wanted the welcome week to specifically focus on helping them feel a sense of belonging to the University community. To meet this need, we developed 'Welcome Home', which typically includes around 120+ events scheduled in partnership with the Students' Union. These events recognise the differing needs of our student communities and contain specific activities targeted at, for example commuters, mature students and care leavers. Events are co-ordinated with academic induction timetables to maximise accessibility (particularly for commuter students) to secure a high level of engagement in extra-curricular learning. Over 4,000 students engaged in these induction events in 2018 with 98.3% satisfaction.

4.1.2 Enriching engagement by responding to students' needs (TQ1)

We have developed a deep understanding of the needs and challenges our students face. Co-ordinated by our Student Voice Steering Group, we obtain a rich matrix of feedback using regular programme and enrolment surveys, along with detailed feedback from course reps, focus groups, and course meetings. This is directed to the appropriate places to ensure both operational and strategic response. Locally, this information directs continuous improvement activity, and centrally it informs policies and operations underpinning enactment of our ICZ strategy; driving changes to course design and assessment practices and providing scope for high levels of stretch ensuring all students are challenged.

The creation of a Student Progression Administrator (SPA) role in each School is an example of the institutional response to student need, with a focus on fostering and enriching engagement. As an institutional team, the SPAs are a conduit between students, Personal Tutors, the dedicated Student Experience and Engagement team, our support infrastructure and frontline teaching staff. They signpost services to students and systematically follow up concerns in student engagement which are highlighted through our use of learner analytics, engagement data and attendance monitoring. Since their role was established in September 2016, the SPAs in one School have recorded 3,292 student interventions, with 559 of those taking place in the current academic year alone.

4.2 Valuing Teaching (TQ2)

As part of our ICZ strategy, we value the wealth of experience our staff have gained from working in roles across different companies, organisations and sectors. In line with our ICZ strategy, excellence here means outward-facing practice, bringing a stimulating, challenging blend of industry-facing skills, knowledge and experience to our students' learning. Through a range of structures and practices we recognise, reward and incentivise staff towards teaching which incorporates and draws upon research and industry engagement. The success of this drive is recognised and validated by external examiners, industry partners and students:

"Excellent use of 'authentic' assessment tasks, which will develop employability skills in students." **External Examiner, 2018**

"I am able to apply my learning to a real work environment which is fantastic." **Danielle Gudojc, Trainee Estimator, Morgan Sindall**

"The University of Salford is a world-class institution on our doorstep who really do understand the needs of our staff and us as a business." **John Fenton, Personnel Director, HMG Paints**

This employer focus in learning and a drive for excellent teaching, which stretches and challenges our students towards excellent outcomes, is paying dividends. In all TEF measures related to the taught experience our performance is at or above benchmark with double positive flags in Assessment and Feedback.

4.2.1 Ensuring a pipeline for excellent teaching (TQ2)

In pursuit of excellent outcomes for our students, and as a matter of standard process, we emphasise the importance of being a great teacher, as well as having the required academic qualifications and industry expertise. Our Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) is taken by all colleagues new to Higher Education and graduates around 60 staff each year. It was re-accredited in 2016 with 12 commendations, including recognition of our institutional commitment to professional development through engagement with the UK Professional Standards Framework, which we encourage for all relevant staff.

This drive for teaching improvement has contributed to rises in the percentage of staff with teaching qualifications from 30% in 2014/15 to 69% in 2017/18. The University has 3 National Teaching Fellows, 4 Principal Fellows and 40 Senior Fellows of the Higher Education Academy. This focus on excellent teaching is recognised by our students and is reflected in the continued increase in performance in all NSS related metrics.

4.2.2 Teaching by industry, for industry (TQ2, LE2 & SO2)

Salford has a long tradition of being engaged with industry, evidenced through the '++' flagged employability for our Part-Time provision. Our ICZ strategy has seen that experience extend into our Full-Time provision with 265 academic programmes being accredited by 57 PSRBs. Building on our PSRB relationships, as well as our research and enterprise partners, we work with 1,768 organisations (HE-BCI 2016/17). Currently, 23% of students participate in formal placement modules as part of their programme of study. For students not choosing a placement, our ICZ-ready curriculum design principle of 'Path to Professional' ensures all students are routinely exposed to work-based learning.

To deliver excellent outcomes for students, we have a requirement that all curricula and programmes are co-produced by teams of students, industry partners, academics and pedagogical experts. The result is programmes which are contemporary, authentic to the world of work and respected by the industries where our students will continue their careers, as recognised by our external examiners. For example, we have professional development modules across our portfolio, on which one external examiner commented:

"The Professional Development module is what I would refer to as the 'gold standard' in preparing students for both their placement year and provides the relevant experience for entering the world of work."

Examples of our industry focus in curriculum design are clearly noted in our most recent institutional report, where over 95% of our external examiners considered that the learning experience of our current students prepared them well for the world of work. For example,

our Film Studies programme was co-designed with HOME, Manchester's primary arts centre, and Watershead, a centre for culture, cinema and digital creativity in Bristol; innovatively, our Occupational Health programme was co-designed with service-users, whilst our programmes allied to the construction sectors have been co-designed with industry partners and have achieved accreditation by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. The impact of industry engagement in our programme creation and design is tangible. For example, **Nahim Yakub, Housing Services Manager for Halo Housing Association** said:

"Our [degree] apprentices are also helping our business as a whole... The experience and learning at Salford and the impact it is having really is immeasurable."

4.3 Rigour & stretch: Programme design & delivery incorporating real world learning that prepares our students for life (TQ3, LE2 & SO2)

The value we place on excellent teaching with an industry focus is not just realised through curriculum design but also in the daily commitment we give to linking the learner experience with industry. To dovetail their experience with the needs of industry, students are taught by industry practitioners who are engaged as visiting lecturers and specialist tutors. Extensive Industry involvement is business-as-usual across the institution; programmes in health see students work with qualified nurse mentors; in TV, radio and journalism, BBC and ITV professionals deliver sessions on industry skills; and students of criminology are taught by industry partners to develop applied critical knowledge. These connections have significant impact on students' perceptions of their own work readiness; by the *start* of their final year, 84% of FT UG students reported, though our registration survey, that they know what career they wish to follow and what they need to do to achieve this.

Similarly, our ICZ-readiness positively affects the appetite of business to see us as their recruitment pipeline and partner of choice. Current students and industry partners engaged in our growing institutional portfolio of apprenticeship developments have said:

"We wanted to ensure this degree was not just purely an academic solution we would endorse, but that it would offer the practical skills required by the engineers of tomorrow," **Jason Phin Training Solutions Business Manager, Siemens**

"At the end of the degree I'll be a HCPC registered Biomedical Scientist which means I'm ready to practice as soon as I graduate," **Bethany Carr, Trainee Biomedical Scientist**

In curriculum delivery, industry partnership and engagement towards excellent student outcomes are realised through combinations of real-world scenarios and exposure to authentic environments, as shown in the following example:

Real world scenarios: At level 5, Civil Engineering students engage in a week long Constructionarium field trip where, in teams, they design and build a structure. Student feedback shows that they find this experience pivotal in their development towards professional life. On our Journalism programme, the largest in the UK to be accredited by the National Council for the Training of Journalists, students work collaboratively to produce 15 news days of TV, radio or live web/print output, and achieve 97% employment or further study and 87% graduate employment or further study (upper quartile Nationally).

Authentic environments: We were the first higher education institution to gain teaching excellence accreditation for our Health Simulation suite by the North West Simulation Education Network. Set up like a hospital ward, the suite is equipped with human patient simulators, including adults, a new born baby, a child and a birthing mum, all of which can breathe, speak and have heartbeats, chest sounds and more. This facility immerses students in the authentic scenarios they will face in practice. In addition, a VR immersive

space recreates a variety of settings, from the back of an ambulance, to a health centre. Across our Nursing and Midwifery programmes these learning resources score over 90% satisfaction in the NSS and employment within the top 10% for the subject.

4.4 Rigour & stretch: tailored towards the needs of industry and built on research (TQ3 & SO2)

We use our research to inform course design and to challenge and stretch students to develop their skills and knowledge. This is led by our ICZ agenda and is focused at the leading edge of both research and industrial innovation. For example, within our Digital and Creative ICZ we have built a digital sandpit, focused on the development and application of emergent technologies that brings together big data visualisation, communication science and immersive teaching. This results in a challenging real-world experience for students across a number of disciplines; for example, Cyber Security apprenticeships, immersive pedagogies in Nursing, and programmes in Technical Theatre & Design. This work ensures that our students have a stretching learning experience designed at the cutting edge of emerging technologies.

4.5 Authentic assessment designed for and with our students (TQ4 & SO2)

As our students progress through their studies, they move from simulations of real-world problems to increasingly live scenarios. The purpose of this is to support development, progression and attainment within a diet of authentic assessment which challenges and stretches. For instance, in our engineering provision, modules across a level are linked by an innovative, inter-disciplinary design project, bringing together students from across cognate disciplines in a way that mirrors working practice. Each group receives a client brief to design an engineering solution. This develops the skills knowledge and abilities to ensure excellent outcomes for our students as evidenced by a 3 percentage point increase in highly skilled employment across the school in the most recent DLHE survey.

4.5.1 Student Progression (TQ4)

Authentic modes of assessment are founded on excellent, agile and innovative practices which develop ongoing conversation with industry to help students progress positively. For example, our analysis of students' performance indicated that there were barriers preventing students who had failed one or more pieces of summative assessment from being able to participate in the main reassessment period in the latter part of the summer vacation. However, our School of the Built Environment had successfully delivered year-round reassessment as part of its model of two-year accelerated undergraduate degrees. Based on the success of this approach we now offer in-year assessment retrieval at levels 3 and 4, supporting students by allowing them to resit in-year rather than having to wait until late summer. This has resulted in an improved pass rate for those who engaged in the scheme with 15% fewer summer reassessments than prior to the introduction of the scheme.

4.5.2 Student Attainment (TQ4)

In previous NSS verbatim commentary we had noticed an issue with perceptions of clarity around assessment criteria. To build our learners' confidence and to aid attainment, as a matter of routine, staff 'unpack' the assignment with students to check their understanding of the task. In many programmes, tutors engage with students to review grade descriptors, and establish a shared language that is reflected in co-created descriptors and secures high levels of engagement and commitment to learning and study from students. This approach also complements the individualised feedback students receive. Similarly, to further aid clarity, we introduced a standard institutional assessment brief, which clearly sets out the intended learning outcomes and marking criteria for the task, seeing a 3 percentage point increase in the NSS question on clarity of criteria in 2018, the year the brief was introduced.

5 Learning Environment

As with our teaching, we have realigned the learning environment of our students to their future careers by giving them access to spaces and technologies that enable authentic practices and offer bespoke support to help them achieve their potential as individuals.

5.1 Resources (LE1 & SO1)

Our high-quality physical and digital infrastructure provide industry-standard resources that help support our students in the acquisition of the skills, knowledge and experience necessary to progress. All students use our accessible and high standard virtual learning environment, which provides resources for learning and assessment. Student survey feedback continues to note our deliberate and strategic approach to providing effective digital and physical resources that aid their learning and development; in the 2018 NSS, one student reported that “[the] quality of the labs, equipment, safety procedures, workload, and the overall teaching efficiency of staff has been very high”.

The University has taken a deliberate, staged approach to the development of our physical resources, which continues to improve not only in our students’ development of independent study and research skills, but their sense of community. Over the last five years over £150 million has been invested in our estate delivering the following developments:

2011 - Media City Campus;
2015 - New on-campus student residences;
2016 - New Adelphi (Arts and Media Centre); Bodmer Lab (Chemistry and Biological Science laboratories); Simulation Suite (Allied Health Professions);
2017 - Library (major redevelopment project);
2018 - Social learning and ‘landing’ spaces (aimed at commuter students).

Student involvement with each redevelopment has been at the heart our Estates planning. A recent example of this is the Library development. This £6M redevelopment provided flexible learning spaces and facilities to meet our students’ needs for a 24-hour campus. As evidence of our commitment to act as ‘our own industry partner’, we offered work-based learning opportunities to our students, who were central to steering the direction of the project by, for instance, shaping the design and layout of the building and producing the artwork. Relatedly, in response to our student demographic we have developed social learning spaces across campus, with a particular focus on providing spaces for commuter students to utilise between scheduled sessions to ensure that they can engage with the full student experience. This has included the provision of lockers and kitchen facilities in addition to bookable rooms, informal learning spaces and breakout areas for active and collaborative learning. These developments have had a demonstrable impact on the student experience with student satisfaction rising from 81% in 2016 to 88% in 2018.

In tandem with excellent facilities on campus an extensive range of field/ real world courses enables students to develop practical skills relevant to the world of work. In Environment and Life Sciences for example these learning experiences range from day trips to the Peak District or the Yorkshire Dales, to residential field courses in the Lake District and Wales, to international locations such as Scandinavia, the Alps and Brazil. Our students find field work an enriching experience and many have credited the skills they learnt on these trips as instrumental in enabling them to secure a graduate job. “This course has so many field trips combined with lab work. You can learn so much from being out in the field and I would recommend this course to anyone with an interest in conservation.” **Bethan Shaw, BSc Wildlife and Practical Conservation graduate**

5.2 Scholarship, Research and Professional Practice (LE2 & SO2)

All our students are actively involved in provision at the forefront of scholarship, research and/or professional practice. As the ICZs fuse research and teaching, students experience innovative, stretching research-as-learning. This actively involves students in the creation of knowledge through engagement with research and through research-related activities such as problem- and inquiry-based learning, drawing on industry expertise and encouraging critical thinking in real-world contexts. For example, the Acoustics research group within the ICZ for Engineering and Environments provides a business model for industry engagement and the development of new research streams. In turn, this work directly stretches students as independent learners, providing opportunities for students to develop advanced employability and professional skills that stretch and challenge students to achieve the outcomes that employers value most highly. Relatedly, across the institution 265 programmes have professional accreditation from 57 professional bodies.

5.3 Personalised Learning (LE3)

The experience of students can be affected by complex factors beyond our control. In recognition of this, we provide ‘open-door’ services to help students with any difficulties they may be facing in their academic or personal life. To ensure that our help is reaching those students most in need, we have strategically adopted a range of approaches allowing us to meet individually with students and help them understand how our services can support them to achieve their full potential. Monthly monitoring reports are published on service use that allow us to identify both the level of demand for each core area of support but also the usage by different elements of the student body. These data highlight, for example, that students with a declared disability make proportionally less use of our careers service and more use of wellbeing; male students are less likely to utilise our wellbeing services although have lower continuation than female students. These detailed data are allowing us to better target proactive engagement to reach those students most in need.

5.3.1 Personalised support for students as part of their student journey (LE3)

Our established model for student support is focused upon self-improvement and personal ‘fitness’ and is based on a comprehensive student success framework drawing together academic, pastoral, wellbeing, careers and other support, regardless of service provider, in to a comprehensive support package. This approach gives us greater flexibility to identify and tailor support to each student, giving them the best opportunity for success. We have drawn together all student facing services under a single-umbrella service called ‘askUS’. This service was co-created with students and provides a ‘one-stop-shop’ for support. This service has evolved and is now open into the evening and on Saturdays, as well as providing access via ‘live-chat’ and Twitter. In 2015, with the Students’ Union we also established the ‘Denizen’ initiative for students living in halls of residence on campus.

Student feedback on their support service has been consistently excellent with a steady year on year increase in NSS outcome and achievement above our sector benchmark. Internal survey data provide greater detail and show that, when asked ‘How knowledgeable was the person helping you today?’, 94% of students rated staff highly. The approval rating for friendly and helpful staff was an almost perfect 97%. The service aims to resolve students’ enquiries quickly, and so 93% of issues are resolved on the same day.

5.3.2 Our teaching framework is flexible to be inclusive of student needs (LE3)

We have an established inclusive teaching framework that supports student achievement regardless of prior education attainment or background. Staff are trained in the production of inclusive learning materials, complemented by enhanced study skills provision for all students. Academic programmes incorporate a flexible approach to curriculum delivery

minimising the need for special adjustments. Students can also personalise their learning experience to suit their preferred learning style by, for example, making use of negotiated assessment tasks. In a number of programmes, students are able to write their own assessment briefs in collaboration with academic staff. This inclusive and empowering approach has led to creative outputs allowing students to control their own learning.

5.3.3 Targeting support to help students achieve their potential (LE3)

Analysis of our continuation data identified that certain sub-sets of students were at greater risk that others, and this is evident in lower continuation for those who are Young, White, Male, or have a declared disability. It was also evident that there was considerable intersectionality in the factors affecting student success and support need. To help provide greater insight to these complexities we have introduced the use of our 'Jigsaw Learner Analytics' platform. This is used to identify students who may be experiencing difficulties with their studies early on, based on data such as attendance at lectures and seminar sessions, library loans, and assessment submissions. This information is then used by Personal Tutors and Student Progression Administrators (SPAs) to provide personalised interventions aimed at improving engagement and progression. An example of the impact of this targeted approach to personalised learning and support can be found in one School, where the attrition rate for incoming first-year students has improved by 26.7% so far in 2018-19 following the introduction of analytics.

5.3.4 Mentoring of individual students (LE3)

Mentoring has a powerful positive impact on an individual's experience, supporting attainment and promoting personal development. Our Mentoring and Recognition programme offers schemes that are tailored to specific needs, delivered in partnership with industry, within schools and across the university.

There are currently 10 schemes for students in a variety of personal, academic and professional situations, notably: the Graduate Internship programme for recent alumni; our established partnership with Common Purpose to develop leadership skills for BAME and Disabled students; industry advice mentoring; and college and higher school mentoring. With support from the University's Advantage Fund, we have set up a mentorship scheme aimed at improving the gender imbalance in the creative industries. More than 30 industry professionals from organisations such as the BBC and design agencies in Greater Manchester have taken part in the scheme, to help our students gain invaluable experience and skills for their future careers. For instance, one of them went on to receive a Young Creative Network award in 2018 for a marketing campaign she developed while being mentored by a successful female role model in the graphic design industry.

The impact of the mentoring schemes is evident in developing a sense of belonging and community with the university, with continued satisfaction of over 95% with the portfolio and opportunities available. In 2019, we are furthering this work through establishing a clear impact framework to directly correlate such engagement with retention and attainment.

6 Student Outcomes & Learning Gain

We are confident that our excellent industry engagement combined with our high levels of satisfaction with Teaching, Assessment and Student Support serve as leading indicators for our improving graduate outcomes, as we have reframed and refocused their educational experience around the skills and knowledge required for their future careers.

Over 80% of our graduates choose to stay in the NW region after graduation. The regional economy offers fewer highly-skilled posts than other parts of the country making immediate entry into graduate employment more challenging. Supplementary metrics drawn from the LEO data demonstrate that although our graduates may not enter graduate employment by the time of the DLHE survey, they do progress successfully into sustained employment at a rate commensurate with our benchmark. These longer-term data demonstrate that the Salford student experience prepares our graduates for success.

The supplementary metric indicates that the proportion of graduates whose long-term earnings are below national average is above benchmark. Since the majority of graduates (81%) remaining in the NW, where median earnings have been reported by the Office for National Statistics at around 7% below national average for each of the years reflected in the data set, we believe that this metric would not be negatively flagged if the LEO earnings data were normalised for regional rather than National earnings.

6.1 Enabling our students to enter work or further study (SO1)

Increasing the proportion of our students progressing into work or further study is a key driver behind our ICZ strategy. Students identified that they found it hard to find relevant work-experience alongside their studies and that this was one factor limiting early progression into employment. To help address this we created Unitemps, a University owned employment agency.

The Unitemps agency provides an important, accessible channel for students to gain experience during their studies, as well as introducing our graduates to clients who are already familiar with the University. In 2017/18 we worked with 1,383 employers to help promote 3,765 employment opportunities (requiring 17,903 recruits) for our students and graduates. These included part-time jobs, integrated work placements and graduate jobs with a range of employers including local SMEs, public sector organisations, and national and global businesses. Exposing students to professional recruitment processes through the Unitemps process has also allowed us to identify those who would benefit from additional support from our Careers and Employability Service with their job seeking skills.

6.2 Helping our students further develop their knowledge & skills (SO1)

Since September 2017, as part of their registration process, we have surveyed the career readiness of all students. This survey has informed delivery of targeted interventions to address student needs. Based upon their responses to the survey, students are then contacted by the Careers and Employability Service to attend targeted sessions. Over 2016/17 and 2017/18, over 2500 students attended 1-2-1 support sessions and more than 7,500 students have participated in one of 970 group Careers and Enterprise workshops.

6.3 Employability and Transferable Skills (SO2)

One of the key ICZ principles is the provision of authentic learning experiences that present the opportunity to gain recognised experience with employers. Examples abound across all areas of the institution, including:

- Our nursing team, led by a National Teaching Fellow, have developed an innovative model for supporting students on clinical placement. Winner of a CATE award in 2018, the team have created a coaching-based support model, breaking away from the model used in most other nursing programmes. This innovation has led to a meaningful increase in student experience, as evidenced by 73% of students reporting that the scheme had increased their clinical leadership skills, whilst 86% felt they were part of the placement team and 86% felt confident in making decisions to delivering patient care. The model has not only enhanced student experience but has delivered a 266% increase in the student nurse placement capacity from 63 to 168, allowing more students to benefit from clinical placements. The coaching model is now also being deployed into programmes for other allied health professionals.

- Geography and environmental science students follow consultancy modules where teams of students work for external clients to address real-world problems. Clients from a range sectors, local SMEs and community groups, large industrial companies and international charities, are consistently appreciative of the student outputs and submit further projects for completion year-on-year. Student feedback is that the challenges of the experience enable them to recognise their team and interpersonal skills and many have been able to use the achievements to enhance their CVs and, in some cases, have gained employment with the client.

- Salford Business School has boosted engagement in employability through a Professional Development module for second year undergraduates annually involving over 450 students. Every student is provided with a live job description and is required to reflect upon their personal strengths and competencies, to create a digital profile, a CV and covering letter. They then engage with a real-world recruitment process co-designed with industry partners including psychometric tests, video interview, an assessment centre, and a personal interview. The University Careers Service provide contemporary expertise on core recruitment techniques and support with delivery. Partnerships have been created with Graduates First to provide and assess psychometric tests for all students and include video interview practice for all students. The School has experienced a 9 percentage point rise in highly skilled employment since the module was introduced.

Not all students choose to progress into traditional employment and prefer to develop portfolio careers. This is particularly notable in the digital and creative industries where the programme level tracking of recent graduates from the performance subjects indicates that as many as 40% of graduates take flexible, often non-graduate roles to provide a secure income whilst building the early stages of their professional freelance profile in a typically precarious sector. To support such students a recent initiative is the opening of our Launch@SalfordUni, an on-campus business incubator. The facility provides physical space, ‘wrap around’ support and advice to inspire and help students develop entrepreneurial skills for their own businesses and social enterprises. The first group started at Launch in 2018 and student feedback highlights the benefits experienced:

- “We are given a safe and relaxed environment, in order for our business ideas to prosper and become reality”, **Darren Cain**

- “Really insightful, enables you to establish foundations of your business and inspire ideas to get your business started”, **Cherrelle Bird.**

6.4 An inclusive experience leading to positive outcomes for all (SO3)

The University is committed to providing an inclusive experience to all our students, and in particular, ensuring those with socially defined and constructed challenges are supported, and these challenges and their broad intersectionality are addressed through removing barriers to success.

Our askUs services (see 5.3.1) respond to the complexity of student demand. In 2017-18 we introduced a new framework to increase access to advice and guidance on issues of diversity and inclusion. This has allowed us to direct and utilise our specialist knowledge to develop strategy, policies, raise awareness and to design training and development opportunities.

6.4.1 BAME and Disability (SO3)

Internal survey data demonstrate that our students from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background report lower confidence in their ability to communicate and utilise networks. The University is committed to increase the proportion of undergraduate students from BAME backgrounds and students with a declared disability obtaining graduate employment. To achieve this, we:

- Invested in the development of confidence and employability skills in our levels 5 and 6 undergraduate students through an industry advice scheme which matches students with mentors. The scheme targets career plans, application processes and life skills, with the Ethnic Minority Undergraduate Scheme (EMUS) specifically targeting BAME students.
- Ran a leadership programme in 2017/18 in partnership with Common Purpose. The programme developed individual leadership skills and built professional networks through a series of intensive workshops, connecting 55 BAME students with 27 external contributors. The programme received a satisfaction rating of over 98% with all participants reporting that they felt better able to use networks and engage socially and professionally as a consequence of engagement. Based on this success, we have extended the programme for 2018-19 to target 100 participants and to offer additional sessions specifically for students with a declared disability who face similar barriers of personal and social capital.

6.4.2 Graduate Internship Programme (SO3)

We have established a Graduate Internship Programme and a match funded SME Internship scheme (part-funded by Santander) that give employers the opportunity to work with our students and graduates. To ensure maximum student impact, these schemes have been focused upon those members of the student community who are most likely to be at risk of unemployment or under-employment. As a consequence, we have sought to specifically address the needs of students and graduates who live locally and are from a BAME background or have a disability. Since the scheme launched in 2016, 203 graduates (91 from a BAME background, and 41 disclosed as having a disability) have undertaken internships and engaged in the accompanying training. These internships have a lasting impact with over 90% of those involved progressing into sustained graduate employment a rate significantly above benchmark for these groups.

7 Conclusion

We have shown that the University of Salford continues to enhance and develop its high-quality provision to meet the needs of our particular students, and the rigorous requirements of the industries towards which our portfolio faces. Underpinned by distinctive practice, which takes its direction from the our ICZ strategy, we are successfully aligning ourselves with the current and future needs of industry and delivering a high-quality, outward-facing learning experience for our students within an exceptional physical and digital learning environment which is co-created with industry, partners and our students themselves.

7.1 Our metrics

Whilst data for highly skilled employment and further study are negatively flagged, these historical snapshots are not representative of the current student experience or of recent graduates. In all but one of the TEF metrics, we are either within or above our benchmark range, with a double positive flag for Assessment and Feedback. These data, along with our internally developed metrics and indicators of career readiness and personal confidence, demonstrate that the changes made to our provision and our learning environment since the introduction of our ICZ strategy in 2016 are already delivering tangible results. Our confidence in the success of our strategy in enhancing the career prospects of all students, regardless of background and prior experience, is founded not only in our internal leading indicators of satisfaction and individual confidence, but also in our history of delivering high quality industry focused part-time programmes for which we have a double-positive flag.

7.2 Excellent practice and impact driven by strategic vision and imperative

Since introducing our institutional ICZ strategy we have transformed our curriculum and pedagogic approach. All programmes have been co-designed with our students and industry and offer learning experiences that are authentic and challenging. Our bold, differentiated ICZ-ready course design and assessment practice is excellent, achieving a double positive flag for student satisfaction. It sits in symbiotic partnership with flexible personalised curricula and driven by a nuanced understanding of our students and their needs, engineered to raise student aspirations and horizons from the outset and delivers high levels of stretch and challenge. Co-creative practice is the norm and our consistent insistence on working with our students and Students' Union as partners motivates and creates strong communities of practice, securing high levels of engagement and commitment to learning from students.

Our sector leading resources and networks create dynamic physical and digital learning environments which complement the excellent curricular and pastoral practice. We provide the authentic environment within which students develop the real-world knowledge, skills and experience that our employer partners tell us are needed and is used by students to enhance their learning, stretching and challenging them throughout their Salford career.

7.3 And finally…

From a period of uncertainty in our institutional identity several years ago, through embedding our co-created ICZ agenda in the last 3 years, we have rediscovered who we are as an institution and reaffirmed our values and our purpose. As consistently evidenced in this document, this deliberate, strategic drive has led to a step change in performance across all TEF metrics, with those more immediate to the experience of our current students showing excellent practice as the real picture of life at Salford today. Like our students, we recognise our transformation and the development of our capabilities and understanding which has led us to our position today. Like our students we know we are no longer standing at the baseline, but on an exciting developmental journey which points to a path of further enhancement. Like our students are already, we aim to #becomeunstoppable.