



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY

# Teaching and Learning Strategy

Summary and initiatives for 2023-2025

Educational Innovation

## Involve students as citizens of their own lifelong learning journey

Our graduates will be motivated by a sense of civic responsibility and be ready to lead ethically throughout their lives. In the Australian context this includes and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders cultures and knowledge systems and a mature understanding of contemporary issues. We acknowledge the importance of students' autonomy and see them as partners in their learning. We will engage with them, fostering a culture of high expectations and resilience.

**Foundational:** involve students as a diverse cohort in the participatory design and review of units, programs, and curricula. We will provide them with culturally and psychologically safe spaces in which to meaningfully inform teaching practice.

**Quick win:** embed shared responsibility for our values, especially integrity and inclusion, through stage-appropriate class activities from commencement of their program.

**Accelerator:** co-design a student learning charter to foster a culture of high expectations, trust and accountability, emphasising the role that students play in building positive learning communities and in setting themselves up as resilient lifelong learners.

## Deliver effective blended learning experiences to maximise engagement and outcomes

The in-person experience at Sydney is critical for student learning, self-efficacy and belonging, acknowledging the many Aboriginal Lands on which we teach and learn. We recognise that the contemporary student has significant lifeload and that university study is only a part of their lives. We will design purposeful learning environments which are flexible and deliver the best outcomes to allow all students to flourish, anytime and anywhere.

**Foundational:** improve systems and processes, such as timetabling, and digital and physical learning environments, to enable the most effective and flexible use of time on-campus and online for fostering seamless learning communities.

**Quick win 1:** transform learning designs where plenary learning experiences build a sense of belonging, purpose and connection with peers, teachers, and the discipline, reducing reliance on lecture-style teaching.

**Quick win 2:** increase informal, culturally and psychologically safe and collaborative learning spaces through investment in covered, accessible outside spaces along the main student thoroughfares and in the Library through co-design with students.

**Quick win 3:** embed best practices for online and blended teaching delivery, such as accessibility standards and Universal Design for Learning, the balance of synchronous and asynchronous learning, and the use of self-directed and teacher-directed activities.

**Accelerator:** trial a 'blocked' model in key first year programs with whole-cohort in-person experiences at the beginning, middle, and end of semester to build a strong learning community, supported by flexible smaller group activities at other times to develop disciplinary depth.

## Recognise, support and reward colleagues for student-centred teaching innovation

Our teaching staff will be recognised through promotions, awards and fellowships in the same proportion as our research staff, and will operate in an environment where they are safe to innovate and experiment in an evidence-informed way. Criteria for recognition and reward will include excellence in teaching, educational leadership and innovation in their many forms across different contexts.

**Foundational:** broaden the definition and measurement of teaching success to incorporate diverse forms of evidence that acknowledge the range of innovation and practices of teaching and coordination across the University.

**Quick win 1:** support key strategic initiatives around teaching and assessment with funding for multi-year team projects to impact student learning and professional learning.

**Quick win 2:** establish a more transparent and collective culture around teaching through systematic and aligned peer review and observation programs, and the sharing of in-person and online teaching practices, Canvas sites and USS evaluations within and across disciplines.

**Accelerator:** enable safe experimentation and iteration where innovating educators are appropriately recognized and rewarded.

### **Transform assessment and feedback practices**

Well-designed, authentic assessments and feedback are foundational for learning. We will design and deliver assessment that is aligned with transformational outcomes and qualities valued by disciplines, employers and the community, including academic integrity, to equip our graduates to be reflective, and culturally competent and ethical leaders.

**Foundational:** redesign course-level assessment towards stronger integrity and alignment with disciplinary, workplace, and students' needs, reducing the use of examination-style assessments, particularly in first year units.

**Quick win:** coordinate assessment models to ensure students experience a coherent suite of assessment forms and types to demonstrate learning outcomes, and better enable program-level and year-level review and coordination beginning with first year.

**Accelerator:** establish design, reporting and review processes as part of curriculum management to facilitate aligned assessment and curricula and the transparent reporting of student outcomes, integrity cases and course-level student and staff workloads.

### **Use data and insights meaningfully to enhance student learning**

A strong data foundation will enable us to track our progress and discover effective teaching and support practices for our diverse cohorts of students. Going beyond dashboards, we will use data intentionally and critically, centering on how it can be used to support success, relationships, and engagement in teaching.

**Foundational 1:** review data collection and use through engagement with ultimate beneficiaries of actionable insights: teachers and students.

**Foundational 2:** encourage the collection, curation, and use of pedagogically-relevant data to inform the timely iteration of teaching and learning approaches.

**Quick win:** work with individual educators and teaching teams to use data around best practice in teaching and assessment to drive continuous improvement.

**Accelerator:** support teachers to use appropriate tools to personalise student learning and support through contextually meaningful data.

### **Become an in-demand provider of dynamic lifelong learning**

We will build our capacity to deliver relevant and accessible short courses and micro-credentials that enhance internal and external partnerships. We will take an 'online first' approach to course development for all postgraduate professional programs, short courses and micro-credentials. Our curriculum and assessment at all stages will reflect and adapt to the changing nature of work and address real-world problems.

**Foundational:** develop course blueprints and templates to support the development and delivery of online short courses and micro-credentials that deliver effective, connected and accessible learning experiences.

**Quick win:** deliver postgraduate online courses in partnership with 2U.

**Accelerator:** build our institutional capabilities to deliver tailored, effective, and responsive educational experiences through academic training opportunities, workload recognition and expert professional support.