



Manchester
Metropolitan
University

Threshold Standards for the Student Learning Experience

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The quality of our students' learning experience is at the heart of our concerns at MMU. That core commitment is the driver for this document, which sets out minimum threshold standards for the quality of the student learning experience across the university. Once they are fully implemented these standards will be recognised as an important step forward and a clear demonstration of MMU's values.

I am sure it is a positive move to set minimum standards for various aspects of the academic provision and care that we provide to students. As such, these standards are part of our shared aim of achieving positive improvements in student success and retention, as well as improving students' perceptions of their academic experience with us. They have been drafted by building directly upon recent enhancement projects and existing good practice across the university.

Following extensive consultation, the principles have been approved by Academic Development Committee and Academic Board, and so their principles constitute binding expectations for the delivery of all taught provision within MMU. However, there will be circumstances where the specific details of implementation will differ in ways appropriate for the programme (for example, in distance learning or CPD). In such cases, course documentation, especially the information issued to students, must demonstrate how the principles and spirit of the thresholds are being satisfied by local means. As the target dates in the document show, not every aspect of the thresholds can be implemented overnight, but once we have done so these are likely to become regarded as student entitlements. This may then lead us to look again at the current Student Agreement.

Of course, the whole idea of thresholds is that they only form a starting point - all of us will wish to enhance beyond this base-line, adapting and improving our practice in ways that are appropriate to particular courses, subject areas or groups of students.

I am very grateful to all those who have contributed to drafting and consultation, and I thank colleagues in advance for the further work that will be needed to follow through on implementation. As ever, this will necessitate close and professional collaboration between academics and professional and administrative colleagues as we refine our processes, information and procedures to deliver these standards and move beyond them.

Threshold Standards for the Student Experience in Taught Provision

Summary Statement

Threshold Areas	Target Date	Specific Provisions
1 Transition and Induction		
<p>Students will receive clear information and guidance prior to entry, at induction and during ongoing induction in accordance with the guidance provided by the Framework for the Management of Student Induction and Transition.</p>	<p>For 2010/11 intakes Elements to be applied where possible for intakes during 2009/10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In accordance with the Framework for the Management of Student Induction and Transition, students will be actively informed and supported through the stages of pre-entry, early induction, and ongoing induction. • The University will provide comprehensive information including (at appropriate points) detailed briefing on pre-reading, provisional timetables, and assessment expectations. • Activities to promote progression and transition will be offered at the end of stages of study. • Students will be supported as necessary by the Department of Employability and Student Success within Student Services to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Declare a disability or specific learning need; - Undertake appropriate diagnostic tests; - Implement individual learning plans. • All international students will have access to academic English support according to need. • All students will be supported in using PDP to reflect on their progress and their skill needs.

2 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

2.1 Collaborative learning

All students will be provided with opportunities to learn in small group, collaborative settings.

2009/10

- Students will be provided with opportunities for collaborative learning in a small group setting within each programme in at least one taught unit at each level.

2.2 Assessment

All students will be provided with early feedback on at least one formative and diagnostic assignment.

2009/10

- Each programme to ensure that every student has at least one formative assessment within the first six weeks of the start of the programme.
 - Provision of rapid diagnostic feedback on this early formative assessment that, if necessary, identifies any study skills needs and refers to student support officer or other additional support.
 - Student to be advised on level of achievement in unit learning outcomes and summative tasks.
 - Results to be monitored and used in review of student progress with personal tutors.
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3 Supporting Student Progress

3.1 Academic Tutoring

Each student will receive clear information on the provision of academic tutoring.

2009/10

- Each student will be allocated an academic tutor.
- Each student will have a timetabled meeting with their academic tutor within three weeks of the start of study (whether 1-1 or in a small group tutorial), with attendance recorded.
- There must be clear arrangements for contacting tutor and scheduling of regular tutorials.
- Minimum number of timetabled tutorial meetings on standard undergraduate programmes: 2 per term (autumn and spring), one in summer to support transition to year 2.
- Staff availability must be clearly publicised for students seeking access to tutors.

3.2 Monitoring and Reviewing Student Progress

Each student's engagement with learning to be actively monitored and reports issued to tutorial staff to allow active progress review.

Progress 2009/10
Fully 2010/11

A combination of indicators of engagement to be used as appropriate to the programme:

- 1 Attendance at key learning events;
- 2 Submission of formative and summative assessments;
- 3 Activity in managed learning environment;
- 4 Library usage (on-site or remote).

- There will be a clear location of staff responsibilities (both academic and administrative) for record keeping and monitoring progress.
- Formal progress reviews of all students on programme to be held at key risk points. (For first year undergraduates this must include a review prior to the end of term one and again before mid-way through the second term).
- Students to receive brief update on progress following reviews (e.g. via MLE) including details of how to seek advice.
- Each student identified as at risk of failure or withdrawal to receive prompt personal contact and specific offer of advice.
- There will be a clear process for contact, advice and follow-up where student appears to, or gives notice of intent to, withdraw from their studies.

3.3 Pastoral Care

Each student to receive information on how to access help and advice on personal issues.

Progress 2009/10
Fully 2010/11

- Students will be provided with information on how to access pastoral care from suitably qualified staff.
- Academic staff will have knowledge of appropriate sources of support for students that are available in the University and have clear procedures for referral and contact.

3.4 Support for transition between stages of study

All students will be provided with support for the transition to the next level of study.

During 2009/10

- Students will be given support through the academic tutorial system for transition through the early stages of their studies.
- Each programme will also provide a transition and induction programme to support student transition to next level of study at an appropriate point in the academic year.

3.5 Support for development of student employability

All students will be provided with opportunities to develop core and professional skills to enhance their employability, and will be supported in recognising and reflecting upon their own skills.

2010/11

All programmes will provide:

- Opportunities for students to develop core and professional skills within the curriculum.
- Structured support for developing students' awareness of core skills, including personal development planning.
- University-wide support for development of student employability through:
 - Adherence to revised general educational aims and graduate outcomes for all university programmes;
 - Continuing introduction and evaluations of initiatives such as the MMU Professional Passport for taught undergraduate and postgraduate students.

4 Evaluation of student opinion

4.1 Structured opportunity for student feedback

Effective arrangements for evaluation of the student experience will be in place at unit, programme and institutional level.

2009/10

- Compliance is required with the revised ARPH section on 'Evaluation of Student Opinion' including requirements for student evaluation of all units and programmes.

4.2 A range of feedback/evaluation methods will be utilised

2009/10

- Programmes will provide a range of appropriate means for students to give their views and will receive clear information on the ways in which they can do this.
- Students will be consulted periodically on whether the arrangements for giving their views are satisfactory.

4.3 Opportunity for anonymous student feedback

2009/10

- Amongst the range of opportunities for student feedback, which may include open, group or committee settings, students will be offered some opportunity to express individual views confidentially and anonymously (e.g. in unit feedback).

4.4 Reporting to students on actions taken	2009/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least once in every academic year, programme teams and central support services will report to students, including non-campus based students, the actions taken in response to student views, including those taken in response to the National Student Survey. • Students will also be given the reasons if some actions have not been possible.
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Supporting Resources

1 Transition and Induction	<p>Student Induction and Transition Framework</p> <p>Shock Absorber Project</p>	<p>www.mmu.ac.uk/change/sas/pdp/induction-transition.php</p> <p>www.shockabsorber.mmu.ac.uk</p>
2 Learning, Teaching and Assessment	<p>Retention and Student Success Project</p> <p>Academic Practice units (e.g. Collaborative Enquiry)</p> <p>Assessment Framework</p> <p>Challenging Assessment</p> <p>Academic Practice Database</p>	<p>www.mmu.ac.uk/change/sas/pdp/retention-student-success.php</p> <p>www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/apd/index.php</p> <p>www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/assessment/framework/</p> <p>www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/assessment/challenge/</p> <p>www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/apdb/</p>

3 Supporting Student Progress

Retention and Student Success Project

www.mmu.ac.uk/change/sas/pdp/retention-student-success.php

Student Information Points

www.siphelp.mmu.ac.uk

Student Services

www.mmu.ac.uk/sas/studentservices

Employability

www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/employability/conferenceresources/index.php
www.mmu.ac.uk/employability

4 Evaluation of Student Opinion

Student Voice Project ARPHandbook

www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/asu/STUDENT_VOICE_PROJECT.pdf

Section on 'Evaluation of Student Opinion'

www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/qamapps.php

Student Agreement

www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/asu/Academic_Policies_Regulations_&_ICPs/University_Student_Agreement/University_Student_Agreement.pdf