



Higher Education
Academy

TRANSFORMING TEACHING
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Universal Design for the Experience Economy

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Overview

- > The role of Higher Education in 21st Century Society
- > The role of Universities
- > Curriculum design for social change
- > Inclusive curricula
- > Universal design

The Role of (UK) Higher Education

> Higher education benefits everyone. It helps individuals to unlock their potential, it is one of the best pathways to achieving a rewarding career and it contributes significantly to physical and mental wellbeing. It also benefits the wider economy – creating jobs, helping businesses prosper by providing them with highly qualified and skilled staff, and stimulating long-term economic growth, innovation, and competitiveness in the global economy. Higher education has also been shown to have a positive impact on social cohesion and the development of active, committed citizens: for example, graduates are likely to be more engaged with their communities.

- BIS, *National Strategy for Access and Student Success in Higher Education* (April 2014), p.7.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299689/bis-14-516-national-strategy-for-access-and-student-success.pdf

The Role of (UK) Universities

1. Are autonomous institutions and must uphold the principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech;
2. Must ensure that they promote freedom of thought and expression, and freedom from discrimination;
3. Must provide an extensive range of high quality academic subjects delivered by excellent teaching, supported by scholarship and research, through courses which enhance the ability of students to learn throughout their lives;
4. Must make a contribution to society through the pursuit, dissemination, and application of knowledge and expertise locally, nationally and internationally; and through partnerships with business, charitable foundations, and other organisations, including other colleges and universities;
5. Must be free to act as critics of government and the conscience of society.

Adapted from [Times Higher Education](#) (2017) 'HE Bill – Lords committee stage response to government defeat'

Curriculum Developments – From Aims to Attributes



Social Mobility and Change

- > Universities are a key driver for social mobility
- > Unlock the benefits of the graduate premium
- > Address barriers to social mobility in curriculum design
- > Inclusive curricula underpin inclusive societies

> *“there is more to be done for our university system to fulfil its potential as an engine of social mobility.”*

- *Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice*, BIS, *Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice* (May 2016), https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/523546/bis-16-265-success-as-a-knowledge-economy-web.pdf

Curriculum Design for Social Mobility

- > How inclusive is the traditional three-year undergraduate degree?
- > In the UK young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds are more than two times less likely to go into HE compared to those students from the most advantaged backgrounds
- > Do degree curricula need to evolve to become more inclusive in their design?
- > The role of HE as a catalyst for greater social mobility is in itself catalysed by enhanced access and inclusivity.
- > UK government's position in this area is clear:
- > *“courses are inflexible, based on the traditional three-year undergraduate model, with insufficient innovation and provision of two-year degrees and degree apprenticeships.”*

Inclusive curricula

- > Developments within the UK around degree apprenticeships and two-year degrees are a response to the government's efforts to create a more inclusive HE system.
- > Creates a space for new and alternative providers to increase market competition with the expectation that this will further drive up standards.
- > The diversification of UK HE comes at a point in time when the sector has witnessed a 30% decline in part-time students from 2011-12 to 2015-16.
 - See HESA, *Higher Education Student Enrolments and Qualifications Obtained at Higher Education Providers in the United Kingdom 2015/16* (January 2017)
<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/12-01-2017/sfr242-student-enrolments-and-qualifications>

Inclusive curricula

- > The benefits of an inclusive approach to teaching and learning are wide ranging and “can facilitate the deliverability of the institutional mission by ... enabling all students to deliver to their full potential.”
- > Advantages of inclusive design include:
 - enhanced brand reputation
 - greater staff and student satisfaction
 - enriched professional development
 - better recruitment and retention
 - improved teaching and learning
- > Strategic approaches to inclusive curriculum design also provide opportunities to work in partnership with employers to develop and enhance the employment outcomes for students.
 - See DfE, *Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a route to Excellence* (January 2017), p.14.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/587221/Inclusive_Teaching_and_Learning_in_Higher_Education_as_a_route_to-excellence.pdf

Universal Design

> For Hockings, “underpinning the concept of inclusive learning and teaching are values of equity and fairness. This means taking account of and valuing students’ differences within mainstream curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.”

- Hockings, C., *Inclusive Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: a Synthesis of Research* (April 2010), p.3.
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/resources/detail/evidencenet/Inclusive_learning_and_teaching_in_higher_education



Universal Design

> Universal Design's primary aim is "the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design."

- See The Center for Universal Design, NC State University
https://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about_ud/udprinciples.htm



Universal Design

> HE providers need to consider ways to embrace the following principles of inclusive curriculum design:

- Learning is enriched by the varied experiences of students
 - Accessible learning is relevant and approachable by all students
 - The curriculum and the means of delivery are both part of this accessibility
 - Students with full access to learning and teaching are more likely to engage with learning, and to reach their full potential
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- DfE, *Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a Route to Excellence* (January 2017), p.32.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/587221/Inclusive_Teaching_and_Learning_in_Higher_Education_as_a_route_to-excellence.pdf

Universal Design

> HEA's work on retention and success has highlighted how important it is to consider the follow in effective curriculum design:

- Partnership
- Flexibility
- Inclusion
- Belonging

- See HEA, What works? Student retention and success change programme
<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/workstream-s-research/themes/retention-and-success/widening-access-programmes-archive/what-works>

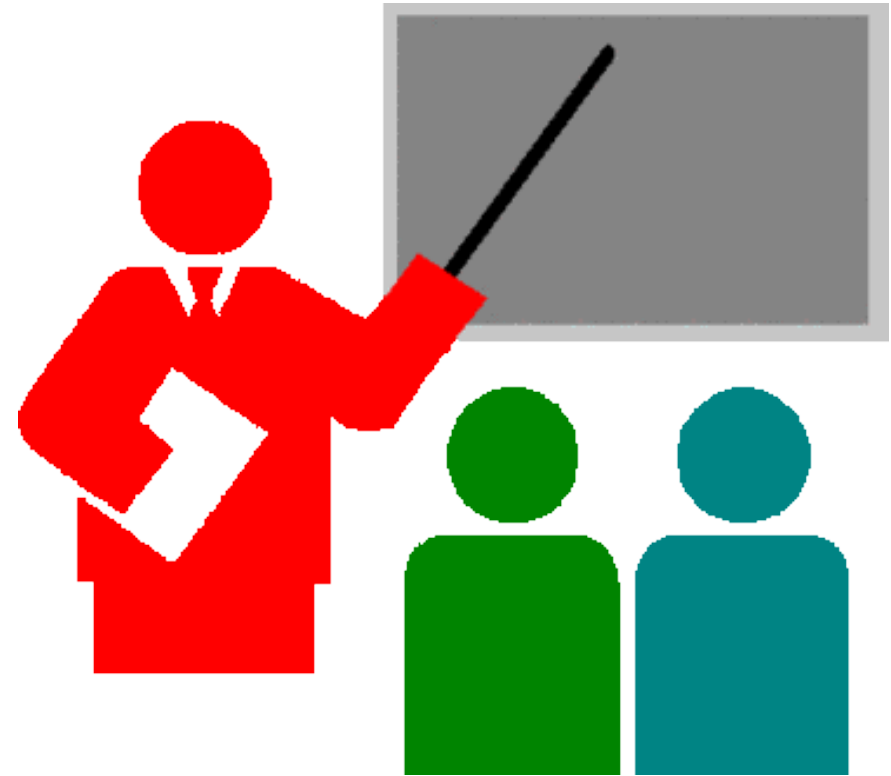
> The connections between **student success** and **student belonging** will become increasingly important for UK HE providers that want to define, differentiate and sustain their course offer.

> In order to put students at the heart of the system, the added value associated with an institution's **graduate identity** will need to be expressed in a way that responds to the fluid demands of the experience economies.

- See Pine II, B.J. and Gilmore, J. H., 'Welcome to the Experience Economy,' *Harvard Business Review* (July-August 1998)
<https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy>

Universal Design

- > Many of the current measures of student success do not fully valorise how “an experience is not an amorphous construct; it is as real an offering as any service, good, or commodity.”
- > If “an experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event,” then HE providers will have to do more to reimagine curricula that speak to the economic conditions that underpin the experience of student success.



Summary

- > Focus on the social context of HE curriculum design
- > Prioritise the role of HE as a driver for social mobility
- > Develop inclusive curricula that value student difference
- > Nurture belonging through Universal Design
- > Create a memorable experience





Thank you for listening!

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