A Strategic Approach to Enhancing the Student Experience

Dr Tim Westlake
Director for the Student Experience
The University of Manchester
Manchester: A World-Class University?
Is Manchester really Distinctive?
## Manchester’s Performance in UK Newspaper League Tables to 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note on dates*</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Times Good University Guide</td>
<td>26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>The Guardian</td>
<td>14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>32&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>51&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>41&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Independent Complete University Guide</td>
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<td>31&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>31&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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“2015 Guide” is for students wishing to enter in the year 2015, but published in 2014 and based on 2012/13 data.
The Manchester Challenge!
“Establishing a Sense of Urgency”

Overall UG Satisfaction (NSS), 2009 - 11

- UoM
- England
- Russell Group
The Manchester Response
“Creating a Guiding Coalition”

- Summer 2010: an internal review of PSS structures to support the Student Experience
- Adjustment to strategic direction, appointment of:
  - Director for the Student Experience (Jan 2011)
  - Vice President, Teaching, Learning and Students (May 2011)
- Clear strategic leadership for the student experience
- Directorate for the Student Experience (DSE) established, bringing together all student-facing activity into a single team
- A new strategic focus (“Developed and communicated a change vision” for a student centred university)
Nothing ... ‘is currently more important than ensuring all of our students have a rewarding and satisfactory experience. Failure to achieve this will seriously damage the University’s reputation across all our activities’.

Manchester 2020

“Establishing a Sense of Urgency”

The quality of the higher education we provide is characterized by an outstanding student experience, the benefits of studying in a research-intensive university, the high quality of graduating students, an active and diverse learning environment, our commitment to social responsibility, and the excellent employability of our graduates.

We will achieve our vision for outstanding learning and continually enhance the quality of student experience, recruiting the highest-quality of students and staff, and providing an outstanding learning environment. The quality of the learning experience will be reflected in students who are motivated to learn, are enthusiastic and engaging teachers.

We are committed to a student experience that encourages curiosity-driven inquiry and research. We will ensure that our students are supported in their own academic and career development.

We will continue to develop our research and teaching areas in order to provide the best possible learning experience and prepare our students for the future.

We will ensure that our students are fully engaged in their learning and development, and that they are supported throughout their time at the University.
Importance of Governance

Chair: Director for the SE

Student Experience Management Group

VP, TL&S

IMG
- RAMG
- SAMG
- WMG

HR-DSE

EMG

TLMG

TLG

TMG

TSLSG

PSS Management Group

Academic Strategy Group

October 2015
DSE “Short Term Wins”: The Manchester Welcome

2011 Welcome banners and introduction of the “Ask Me” campaign.

2012/2013 Purple People become “Ask Me” Ambassadors, extends to Halls of Residence, staff increasingly seek to wear the badge

2013/15 Increasingly integrated programme between Welcome, International Orientation and UMSU. Events for all tastes, scheduled to fill ‘empty’ times (5 – 7pm) e.g. Night at the Museum; Distinguished Lectures; Zombies!
DSE “Short Term Wins”: Student Communications

Continually evolving student “portal” - My Manchester
A University Wide Agenda ("Empowering Broad Based Action")

- Programme ran 2011/13
- Project Sponsors – Senior Academics and PSS
- Dedicated Project Managers
- Single Team: Project Teams from across PSS
- Not a DSE alone initiative
A University Wide Agenda ("Empowering Broad Based Action")

• Eight cross cutting themes
• School Student Experience Action Plans
• PSS Student Experience Action Plans
• PSS Student Experience leads in every academic school and administrative service
• Student Experience Leads Conference
• Mystery Shopping
• We Make Manchester Roadshow
• An on-going partnership across the University
A New Relationship with Students

• Student representation on all key groups e.g. eight cross cutting themes
• Student Experience Leads Conference
• A new partnership with UM Students Union e.g. RAs / JCRs; WP; Athletic Union
• Peer Mentoring
• Hearing the student voice
What Next? “Incorporating Change into the Culture”

• The Manchester Employability Model

• The Student Wellbeing Model
What Next? “Incorporating Change into the Culture”

Wellbeing Model (nef, 2008)

Manchester Employability Model
What Next?

• The Manchester Employability Model
• The Student Wellbeing Model
• The My Manchester Award
• A new Student Residences Strategy
What Next?
What Next?

- The Manchester Employability Model
- The Student Wellbeing Model
- The My Manchester Award
- A new Student Residences Strategy
- Student Lifecycle Project
Make the most of Manchester and think about your future

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduates in graduate-level jobs or further study</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russell Group Ranking</td>
<td>17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;/24</td>
<td>19&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;/24</td>
<td>20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; / 24</td>
<td>20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; / 24</td>
<td>24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; / 24</td>
<td>16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; / 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector Ranking</td>
<td>30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; top 24%</td>
<td>29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; top 24%</td>
<td>32&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; top 25%</td>
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<td>28&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; top 24%</td>
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2015: Manchester increased by 1% compared to England (no change) and Russell Group Average (declined by 1%)

Ambition: 90% by 2020

Individual Schools show it can be done
Conclusion from a PSS Perspective

- Initial changes required a burning platform
- Early wins brought creditability for DSE
- Single team leadership has been essential
- Organisational structure is not as important – if you have single team working!
- Needed clarity of governance and ownership
- Access to Student Experience Strategy Funds has been crucial
- It was crucial to win the argument that everyone in the University has a role to play in the student experience
Conclusion from a University Perspective

• A new partnership with students was essential
• For some the focus on students meant a poor outcome in REF – I don’t think so!
• Green Paper will ensure the continued focus on the student experience
• Success requires c38,000 individual strategies
• It’s the academic experience stupid!
• You can lead a horse to water but you can’t make it drink
• Manchester still has a long way to go!
Over to you and questions for us?