INTRODUCTION

This Teaching and Learning Strategy for Queen Mary, University of London replaces and updates the second Teaching and Learning Strategy (1999-2002). Since the 1999 Teaching and Learning Strategy, the College has produced a Strategic Plan 2001-2006 which sets the framework for subsidiary strategies. The College has also produced a Human Resources Strategy which contains aims associated with the development of staff, including objectives related to teaching and the facilitation of student learning. This Teaching and Learning Strategy uses the Strategic Aims and Priorities in the Strategic Plan to develop a framework at College level. Action plans and targets will be developed for three major projects to be funded from the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund. At the operational level of the school or department or disciplinary grouping, local teaching and learning strategies will be developed with associated action plans.

The College Strategy for Teaching and Learning will support activities relating to the following national areas of priority:

- Encouraging and disseminating good and innovative practice in support of high quality learning and teaching
- Enhancing the employability of graduate and diplomats.

JULY 2002
1 Mission Statement for the College

- To position ourselves across a range of measures of research performance, in the top decile of UK universities
- To achieve and sustain a reputation for teaching excellence and innovation that ensures a buoyant student intake in both quality and quantity
- To develop and sustain a corporate image which reflects the quality of the research, teaching, facilities and environment of the College
- To support the above through efficient, cost-effective administrative structures.

(Endorsed by the Council, 16 December 1999, approved by the Council as part of Strategic Plan, March 2001)

2 Link to the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan 2001-2006 sets out the broad agenda for the College. The Teaching and Learning Strategy is one subsidiary strategy which forms a component of the strategic aims and priorities in the Plan. Other strategies which specifically link to the Teaching and Learning Strategy are the Information Strategy and the HR Strategy. The Staff Development section of the HR Strategy identifies improved Teaching and Learning, particularly the increased use of ICT, as an important target.

The College Teaching and Learning Strategy sets out the broad strategic aims that underpin the vision set out in the Mission Statement. It covers all courses and programmes of study taught within Queen Mary, University of London. It is intended to form a framework for use by schools or departments or disciplinary groupings in the translation of institutional strategy into local objectives and outcomes over the planning period from 2002 to 2005.

This Strategy updates the 1999-2002 Teaching and Learning Strategy to include the latest imperatives at College level, more recent developments in teaching and learning in higher education, and recent changes in national policy.

The College acknowledges that its location on different sites in East London and in the City of London provides many opportunities for:

- Developing diverse teaching strategies;
- Building multi-cultural learning environments;
- Forging links with vibrant local communities;
- Widening participation;
- Responding, in medicine and dentistry, to a challenging clinical environment.

A distinctive feature of the College is its diverse student body. The College will work to ensure that the needs of students from all backgrounds are met and that they are encouraged to achieve their full educational potential. Likewise the College seeks to create a positive, inclusive atmosphere for students, based on respect for differences and is committed to preventing racism and discrimination.
The College’s federal position in the University of London provides further scope to enhance the learning experience of students in most disciplines. In the period covered by the strategy new developments will occur as a result of the strategic alliance with City University and collaboration with other institutions.

It is intended that each discipline in the College should implement the Teaching and Learning Strategy at local level and develop their own action plans, taking account of the distinctive features of the discipline.

During the period covered by this strategy the College will respond to the national imperative to widen participation in higher education and both institutional and local teaching and learning strategies will evolve to take account of a changing population of students with different types of experience and needs.

3 HR issues

The agents of change necessary to fulfil the strategic requirements for teaching and learning, alongside original scholarship and research, come through the recruitment and development of high quality staff and the admission of students able to flourish and succeed in the College’s distinctive environment.

The College recognises that a coherent and strategically aligned programme of staff and educational development will be essential to underpin implementation of the strategy. The main thrust will come through central provision from the Educational and Staff Development Directorate. There are also activities organised at local level, especially with regard to discipline-specific development, including teaching quality enhancement interventions. The Queen Mary Performance Appraisal Scheme provides an opportunity, although not the only opportunity, for discussion of development needs to enhance teaching and learning.

A Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is being offered to selected academic staff across the College on a pilot basis in the year 2002-03. It is intended that this provision will be extended to all staff and students after the pilot period. This is being supported jointly by Educational and Staff Development and Information Services. This provision will not preclude the use of other VLEs at school/department level.

4 Curriculum issues

The College keeps under continuous review all its curricula to ensure that they are relevant to the needs of disciplines and to respond to market forces. The College encourages innovation and intends that its curricula should be amongst the most up to date in the UK. The modular course unit system that operates in arts, science, engineering and social science areas is valued by both staff and students and it allows considerable flexibility and scope for updating and change.

The requirements for accreditation by professional bodies are also paramount in shaping curricula in a number of disciplines across the College.
New methods of delivery are being established alongside traditional approaches, as appropriate to the demands of disciplines represented in the College. Strategies that involve e-learning are actively encouraged where appropriate.

During the period covered by this Strategy an important development will be the increased use of distance learning for the delivery of curricula in order to:

- promote flexibility in teaching and learning;
- widen access;
- provide alternative approaches to high quality learning by students.

One of the strengths of the College is the quality of the frontline academic and pastoral support provided at departmental or subject level through academic advisors and personal tutors. Local support and guidance is supplemented by a range of specialist central services which include personal counselling, welfare advice, support for students with disabilities and curriculum support in English language, mathematics and study skills.

In line with national trends in higher education, the College seeks to make the development of abilities and attributes connected with employability, otherwise known as key skills, more transparent to its students. The College is working towards making key skill more explicit in modules and programmes of study. This is being achieved through recommended modules descriptors and programme specifications. The development of assessment strategies for such key skills requires further attention.

Best practice in teaching and learning is disseminated in various ways in the College, including through the Learning Technology Bulletin. The College encourages innovation in teaching and learning in different ways, including through the provision of prizes (Drapers’ Awards) to reward new developments in teaching and learning.

5 Integrating Equal Opportunities

5.1 Excellence in Teaching and Learning

The College is committed to providing teaching and learning of the highest quality and is committed to providing choice and flexibility in its programme of study. The College has developed a leading role in maintaining and enhancing the quality of teaching and of the learning experience. In progressing this further the College will address race equality issues in teaching and learning through:

- Reviewing the breadth and scope of programmes, highlighting any significant differences and identifying causes in access issues for different ethnic groups.
- Monitoring the development of progression routes into and through higher education, and into subsequent employment by ethnic group.
- Identify the causes of any differences in progression routes, identifying whether these raise issues relating to potential discrimination.
- Developing the race equality and diversity dimension of teaching and learning strategies and networking with other Institutions as part of improving quality.
5.2 Widening and Increasing Participation

The College aims to ensure that there is a more balanced social profile of students participating in higher education and that there is fair access. The College will further enhance its outreach activities to encourage and enable a wide range of students to enter higher education. In addition, the College will aim to ensure that there is no racial inequality in access and that there are no barriers to student progression in order to ensure students succeed. This will be achieved through developing the race equality dimension in partnership agreements, where appropriate drawing on existing work on involving black and minority ethnic individuals, groups and organisations in partnerships.

6 Quality issues

College quality assurance systems ensure the effectiveness of the Teaching and Learning Strategy. The devolved quality framework starts with the frontline teaching staff and is informed by the students. Policies and procedures are set out in the Queen Mary Quality Assurance Handbook, which is revised annually. Responsibility for quality of teaching and learning in postgraduate research programmes rests with the Management Committee of the Graduate School.

The College has used the introduction of the new QAA review methodology as an opportunity to review its framework for Internal Review. From 2002-03, a six year Internal Review cycle will be re-launched to ensure that it is a supportive process that works in close partnership with departments to enhance the student experience. The College is scheduled to receive a QAA Institutional Review in the autumn of 2004. The reports produced as an outcome of all the reviews will be used to inform the continual monitoring of the College’s quality framework.

External Examiners play a pivotal role in ensuring the academic standards of awards offered by the College. The support provided to External Examiners to enable them to fulfil their roles effectively is currently being reviewed. An online resource for External Examiners is in the early stages of development with the aim of providing a web-based induction and source of reference.
7 **Aims and Objectives of the Teaching and Learning Strategy**

**Teaching and learning in a research-rich environment**

7.1 To promote teaching and learning in a supportive yet challenging environment enriched by original scholarship and research.

Through:

[a] Recognising the value to the College of having staff who have earned the esteem of peers through appropriate output measures.

[b] Increasing the recruitment of postgraduate research students, both at home and overseas, to reflect the strengths of the College as a leading research institution.

[c] Providing a modern well-maintained physical environment for teaching and learning and ensuring that all campuses are environmentally friendly and pleasant places to study and live.

[d] Developing and maintaining a socially and culturally diverse environment, which ensures that students have the opportunity to be exposed to new and challenging experiences.

**Fostering independent learning**

7.2 To encourage students to become independent learners and to take responsibility for their own learning during their studies at Queen Mary and beyond as part of lifelong learning.

Through:

[a] Developing strategies for teaching and learning that foster deep approaches to learning and which recognise the teacher as a facilitator of other people’s learning.

[b] Promoting interactive learning with staff and collaborative learning with each other.

[c] Having access to resources that will support students as individual learners.

[d] Having appropriate and clearly defined learning objectives/outcomes for students that are documented for all programmes of study and courses/modules.

[e] Recognising the role of the teacher as a facilitator of other people’s learning

[f] Diversifying strategies for the assessment of student learning.
[g] Developing alumni activities so as to continue the benefits of the learning experience with those who have benefited from and then left the College.

Quality in educational provision

7.3 To achieve the highest possible quality in educational provision, as judged by the relevant internal and external performance indicators.

Through:

[a] Working within a devolved quality framework that ensures that quality management is embedded as close to the point of delivery and possible.

[b] Promoting and supporting an integrated approach to quality enhancement initiatives across the institution.

[c] Monitoring the implementation of local teaching and learning strategies and reporting progress to the Quality Enhancement Committee through the Teaching and Learning Quality Enhancement Group.

Modern learning resources

7.4 To provide the best possible range of modern learning resources appropriate to the needs of students, staff and relevant to the programmes of study.

Through:

[a] Keeping under review all aspects of the teaching environment so as to provide the best possible teaching and learning to students.

[b] Ensuring that students study in well-equipped, well-maintained teaching accommodation where up to date technological resources can support innovative teaching methods.

[c] Providing modern customer-focused library services with extensive opening hours and access to a wide range of electronic resources from home as well as on campus and excellent provision of books, journals and other support materials.

[d] Complete a Learning Resource Centre at the Mile End campus to allow access to a range of IT resources and learning materials over a wide range of opening hours.

[e] Complementing the residential village on the east side of the Mile End campus with a range of integrated support facilities, including a learning resources centre.
Application of ICT

7.5 To exploit the potential of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to facilitate flexible approaches to teaching, high quality learning and assessment, both on and off campus. These developments will be supported by sound educational principles.

Through:

[a] Taking full advantage of the potential of new technology in teaching, learning and assessment and to take part in collaborative ventures in borderless education and the e-university.

[b] Developing high quality distance learning to widen the provision of higher education and to do this both using internal resources and through collaborative partnerships.

[c] Reviewing and enhancing ICT support for the delivery of teaching, facilitation of student learning and assessment.

[d] Implementing the use of Virtual Learning Environments to support teaching and learning across the College.

[e] Providing open access PC facilities with extensive working hours and network connections for students in residences.

Developing reflective practice and communication

7.6 To enhance in all students the development of powers of critical thought, reflection and the ability to express themselves orally and in writing.

Through:

[a] Enhancing the development of reflective practice as part of the learning process.

[b] Developing progress files to log the skills gained through all types work experience, both formal and informal, and through placements.

Developing student skills and employability

7.7 To encourage students to recognise and log the development of their own skills and be aware of the importance of these in the development of their academic and professional careers.

Through:

[a] Making the development of abilities and attributes connected with employability, otherwise known as key skills, more transparent to it students.
[b] Seeking to develop students across a range of generic and discipline specific skills in courses and providing constructive feedback.

[c] Making effective use of current and former students in the marketing of courses and the recruitment of students – in particular, by highlighting the achievements of recent graduates.

[d] Continuing to work closely with the University of London Careers Service so as to provide opportunities for students to gain employment.

**Excellence in teaching**

7.8 To deliver teaching by staff who have had access to initial training in the pedagogy of higher education, or previous experience, and thereafter opportunities for continuing professional development.

Through:

[a] Providing accredited training programmes for staff who teach students, such as the Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice and the Certificate in Learning and Teaching.

[b] Encouraging, where appropriate, staff to devote a reasonable proportion of their time to interaction with their professions either by joining and taking part in professional organisations or by achieving professional recognition and reward.

[c] Encouraging the development of international collaborations and exchanges, in the context of personal development of teaching and research, financial value to the College and international co-operation.

[d] Recognising and promoting high quality teaching and through the annual Drapers’ Awards for Excellence in Teaching.

**Changing patterns of student participation**

7.9 To be flexible so as to respond as and when is necessary to changing patterns of student need and student recruitment.

Through:

[a] Maintaining rigorous systems for course approval, which are flexible to allow modifications to be made promptly to curricula when necessary.

[b] Reviewing the needs of potential students at undergraduate and postgraduate level so that this can inform the design of taught courses.

[c] Responding to the current demands for students by distance learning and for part-time programmes of study.
Reviewing the portfolio of postgraduate taught courses with the aim of increasing our share of the market for postgraduate students.

Encouraging new initiatives in academic departments which enhance the College through improved academic standards and income.

Responding constructively to the way schools and FE Colleges are implementing the new A/AS level curriculum.

Integrating the government's agenda for widening participation into the recruitment of students who are suitably qualified and can benefit from study at the College.

Keeping the student recruitment strategy under review to ensure that all aspects of the College's marketing, public relations and alumni development activities contribute to student recruitment in an integrated fashion and meet the needs of academic disciplines.

**Responding to the needs of stakeholders**

7.10 To be sufficiently broad so that implementation can be appropriate to the needs of all stakeholders.

Through:

Keeping under review the academic structure in the College which best fits the national and international higher education imperatives.

Fostering links with the health services, so as to achieve good co-operation which will ultimately benefit patients. This means keeping under review all aspects of academic/clinical links - financial, joint services, clinical teaching, and clinical research.

Encouraging the active involvement of students in all aspects of the academic life of the College, particularly academic services (e.g. library and computing services).

Updating policies on equal opportunities, complaints and harassment.

Reviewing the fees charged for study at the College - within Government policy - so as to optimise income.
8 Implementation of the Strategy

The Teaching and Learning Strategy forms a College-level framework for use in schools/departments and disciplinary groupings. They will develop their own action plans which combine the generic College-level objectives with the specific discipline-level objectives.

The generic College-level teaching and learning objectives will be implemented using the resources allocated in the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund. Three action areas have been identified:

- Identifying and Disseminating Good Practice in Learning and Teaching;
- Enhancing the Quality of Education;
- Delivering and Embedding Learning Technologies.

The activities in the action areas are expanded with targets for the three years 2002 to 2005 in the Action Plans.

Approval, monitoring and evaluation of the Action Plans to implement the strategy for the planning period will be the responsibility of the Academic Board, but delegated to the Teaching and Learning Quality Enhancement Group, through the Quality Enhancement Committee.

July 2002