

UniHaven Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy

Background and Context

UniHaven's Teaching and Learning Strategy provides a framework for ensuring that its teaching and learning approaches are used to promote student success in line with the vision, values, and policies set out in UniHaven's Quality Assurance Manual and in line with programme learning outcomes. This strategy document outlines how the teaching and learning aims and principles described in the UniHaven Teaching and Learning Policy and as listed below will be delivered at the College.

Teaching and Learning Aims and Principles

The College's aims for excellent teaching and learning aims to create a teaching and learning culture that

- Works to achieve high levels of student engagement via flexibility of programme delivery, modularisation, and the deployment of state-of-the-art online learning technology.
- Empowers students to be autonomous learners that will be very well prepared for the third level education that they will progress to.
- Promotes high-quality teaching (encompassing a wide range of practices and methods) and pedagogies which encourage active, independent, learning, in which the roles and responsibilities of staff and students are clear.
- Establishes an inclusive college that promotes diversity in the student population through active and balanced recruitment approaches.

As a general guide, the College expects that:

- Teachers will select appropriate methods of teaching and promote student learning based on the specified minimum intended programme learning outcomes (MIMPLOs) and minimum intended module learning outcomes (MIMLOs) and link these with approaches to assessment. Programme documentation outline MIPLOs



and MIMLOs and the methods to be used in addressing the intended learning outcomes.

- Teachers will provide timely formative feedback to students regularly as well as formal assessment feedback.
- Programme Board will review the teaching and learning methodologies, student impact and learning effectiveness to identify potential areas for development and, where necessary, development and resource requirements.
- Curriculum development and review will consider the student learning experience and identify how the different blend of teaching methods and technologies serves the overall programme aims and intended learning outcomes.
- The Claned learning management system (LMS) will be available to support the delivery and assessment of all modules and to all registered students. New and emerging technologies will be explored and suggestions from Teachers will be discussed at Programme Board.
- The selection of and use of premises and facilities is done in ways that maximise the creation of good quality learning spaces.
- The wider learning infrastructure that includes the library and IT facilities will be resourced appropriately to support teaching and learning aims.

The College aims to create a positive and supportive learning environment where students can flourish. Ultimately, students will be encouraged to be independent, autonomous, confident learners as they prepare themselves for progression to study at Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) post successful programme completion at the College.

The Programmes

UniHaven College will teach international foundation pathway programmes and English language programmes. All programmes that have or will have QQI approval will have been developed as per UniHaven's approved QA policies.

The Student Profile

The programmes are designed to prepare international students for entry into higher education programmes delivered through the medium of English in Irish HEIs. Students



will come from African, Asian, South American and Middle-Eastern countries predominately and will likely be a mix of faiths, nationalities, genders, sexual orientations, abilities and cultures. Most may not have heard of Ireland before they were recruited onto this programme and may never have lived in or visited Ireland before. The College will ensure that students are aware of what is expected of them and will ask students for their views on teaching, learning and assessment as a way to understand the student experience and to improve teaching, learning and assessment at the College.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methodologies and Instruments

One of the most important goals – and greatest challenges – of teachers is to create a learning environment in which the students actively participate in their education. An effective way to promote active participation is through dialogue and through both teach-student and student-student interaction in the classroom. Many international students have been used to passive education systems and/or rote learning environments and are often overwhelmed by the new expectations asked of them, by the fear of making mistakes, or by the new learning norms that they are now being exposed to for the first time. For these reasons, students can be extremely reluctant to enter into active dialogue and interaction in the classroom. The below teaching and learning approaches are designed to equip teachers with several approaches that they can use to foster a safe classroom learning environment in which all students can become active and confident participants.

Teaching Methodologies

The teacher will have a variety of proven strategies for leading classroom teaching at their disposal. The EAP teacher will play a lead teacher role in the context of students EAP learning because English language skills are at the core of the programme for many students who will be learning academic modules through English for the first time. The EAP teacher will work with all module teachers weekly to ensure that students English language confidence and skills are improving as expected and that coherent plans to improve student concerns are developed and implemented.

Teachers will employ a range of approaches to ensure a high quality of teaching as follows:



- Effective Class Discussions - Class discussions will allow teachers to fit particular strategies to class needs. This flexibility will emphasize knowledge and conceptual gain through peer-to-peer dialogue.
- Case-Based Learning (CBL) - CBL is an established approach used across disciplines where students apply their knowledge to real-world scenarios, promoting higher levels of cognition. In our programme, students typically work in groups on case studies or stories involving one or more scenarios. The cases present a disciplinary problem or problems for which students devise solutions under the guidance of the teacher.
- Digital Learning – the LMS includes a collaborative and social element of learning.
- Effective Lecturing - Teachers will consider different approaches to a lecture that introduce more active and participatory components, thereby enhancing higher orders of thinking and learning during class.
- Team-Based Learning (TBL) - TBL is a pedagogical strategy that engages student knowledge through individual testing and group collaboration. Following individual answers, students join teams and work through problems, appealing when they are incorrect. This process motivates students by holding them accountable to themselves and one another while introducing them to a variety of thought processes devoted to a single problem.
- Flipped Classroom - In a flipped classroom, the material typically explored in lectures will be delivered outside of class through media like video lectures or digital modules. Class time then focuses on developing knowledge through active learning strategies like discussion or group activities. Flipping the classroom has been shown to improve students' conceptual grasp of content beyond memorization and basic knowledge, and to improve the diversity and inclusivity of the classroom climate.
- Group Work - Collaborative learning can be a powerful strategy in the classroom. Group work will help students uncover and address gaps and misconceptions in knowledge, further develop their conceptual frameworks, improve their public reasoning and team-based skills, and free teachers to help students pursue higher order thinking.
- Question and Answer (Q&A) – Q&A sessions are undoubtedly the most common way in which we expect to create dialogue in the classroom. Teachers can invite students to ask questions at any time during the class or set aside a specific time for



questions. The choice to allow students to interrupt during classes, however, will help in building an active learning environment because students can engage with the instructor throughout the class. It is also important to remember that the teacher can ask questions of the students too.

- Think / Pair / Share - Think / Pair / Share is a technique that allows students to interact with a peer to work out a problem or question that the teacher has assigned. Students are asked to work with a partner so that the students can actively work through problems.
- Informal Debates - Informal debates should be encouraged and the teacher should take the time to discuss the debate, outlining the different positions including flaws in reasoning, incorrect assumptions or facts.
- Formal Debates - Formal debates are a good tool to get students engaged in both careful research and presentation techniques. The competitive nature of debate can often spark student interest. The teacher needs to set out the debate rules, to expect that research is done beforehand preferably demonstrated through an assignment given to the instructor before the debate.
- Presentations - Individual and group presentations are good tools to teach the important skill of oral communication. For some students, presentations are a joy; for others, presentations are wrought with anxiety and fear. Preparing for and delivering presentations in a safe classroom environment will give students the confidence to present at third-level.
- Oral examinations - Oral examinations can be a very effective way of determining whether the students can articulate ideas they have learned in the course. It becomes very clear that a student has done the course readings when having a one-on-one discussion with them about the module. When the exam is designed as an open-ended interview session with several critical questions along the way, the teacher can often gauge what aspects of the module had the most impact on the student.

Learning Methodologies

- Visual Displays – Visual Display is a useful technique to process or summarise the knowledge that is taught in class and for students who learn visually more than auditory. Teachers might use visual tools such as flow charts, graphic organisers,



concept maps, pictorials/schematics/diagrams that allow students to grasp information more effectively and to facilitate visual memory and recall.

- Teamwork - Dividing the class into groups to complete a task is a teaching strategy recommended to encourage students to work with one another. By doing so, those who have more knowledge of the subject can share their knowledge and help their peers understand the topic better and students can collaborate more through knowledge-sharing to enhance individual and group learning. Teachers will promote cooperative learning by splitting the class into small groups and dividing different tasks amongst students. For example, in a Science module class, one student could do an experimental activity, another could read the instructions and someone else could record outcomes.
- Inquiry-Based Learning - Encouraging learners to ask questions is an effective teaching strategy that not only motivates students to think more practically but also helps them to become independent learners from the responsibility they take for ensuring that the questions they ask maximises their understanding of a given topic. Inquiry-based learning motivates students to ask questions and work with one another to solve problems. Inquiry-based learning provides students with an experience of working with one another as a class and allows students to revise previous learning and retain new learning in a better way.
- Employing Technology - Using technology in the classroom is a valuable tool that prepares students to learn 21st-century technology skills. Use of MS Office software, PowerPoint presentations, videos etc. adds variety to the classroom and facilitates greater interest in learning. The LMS will be used for pre- and post-class work also in ways that makes learning material easily accessible and digestible because it can accommodate the most common formats and allows for a range of learning materials to be made accessible to students.

Assessment Instruments

Formative and summative assessment feedback will be provided to students in a timely manner and will include areas that the student needs to work on for future improvement. The primary goal of the assessments chosen is to encourage active learning and build



student confidence to enable students to flourish academically. Assessments for a given programme may include some or all the following:

- Continuous Assessment (CA) - CAs include written tests, assessments, assignments, laboratory experiment write-ups/reports, etc. either in individual or group form generally undertaken throughout the academic year. The CA is usually a written assessment offering the student an opportunity to demonstrate research skills as well as written structural and presentation skills.
- Examinations – Examinations are written assessments usually conducted at the end of a semester or the academic year. They are undertaken under the supervision of a Teacher who invigilates to ensure that the student complies with the time and academic integrity constraints under which they are assessed. Examinations assess students' competence, skills and knowledge in the module being assessed as well as their ability to perform under the associated examination constraints.
- Presentations - Presentations are usually completed orally either with or without technology such as MS PowerPoint. They can be done individually or as a group. Individual presentations assess for research, content, oral presentation skills, and structure. Team or group presentations also include team working and presentation roles and responsibilities (Introducer, Speakers, Summarisers etc.).
- Multi Choice Questionnaire (MCQ) – MCQs require students to choose from several possible answers in arriving at the answer they deem to be correct or most correct and are generally completed by individual students individually. MCQs assess students' analytical skills and skills of recollection.
- Personal Reflections –Personal Reflections can take the form of a written statement, or a journal completed over time. Self-reflection may be combined with presentations if the learnings are to be shared to the class and can be done individually or in small groups where group assessments have been completed. Personal reflections assess students' ability to self-analyse, self-assess, and list the key learnings from the learning journey they have been on mapping their strengths and weaknesses.
- Project Work – Projects usually refer to a fixed defined block of work outlined with specific completion instructions that must be completed over a period of time against specific outcomes and outputs. Projects may be completed individually or in groups. Project work assesses students' ability to follow instructions, to meet



specific deliverables and timelines and to present their findings and outputs in a structured way.

Learning Monitoring and Review

Learning monitoring and review will include the formal monitoring and review processes completed by Programme Board, the provision of feedback to students and the collection and analysis of learning data as outlined in the UniHaven Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review Policy. Staff and students are represented in the College self-monitoring and review processes and governance structures.