

Let's Grow Strategic Measures



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Introduction

Let's Grow will create a clear approach to personal and professional development that results in the best possible preparation for students and graduates to achieve their aspirations. This approach will ensure students and graduates are "work-ready" in the context of graduate employment, self-employment and new venture creation, or "study-ready" in the context of postgraduate study. We will ensure that students and graduates are "life-ready", capable of understanding themselves and others and appreciative of the values which underpin living life well.

We will achieve this by:

- ✓ Developing a clear understanding for each student and graduate of how their personal constitution feeds into how they think, behave and perform.
- ✓ Using this insight to map clear pathways linked to personal and professional goals.
- ✓ Building up self-belief and wellbeing through positive affirmations of individual worth through individual and group support.
- ✓ Empowering our students and graduates to achieve their potential and make valuable contributions to all the communities to which they belong through the development of skills and attitudes which underpin success.

Let's Grow recognises the diverse academic community that is Bloomsbury Institute. Reflecting our vision, mission and values, Let's Grow aims to provide the best possible support, opportunities and learning for all students and graduates in order that they reach their full potential.



Strategic measure 1

Let's Grow embodies a person-centred approach to personal and professional development. All students and graduates will be well-prepared to take on the challenges of postgraduate study, employment, self-employment or entrepreneurship, and lead lives that are rewarding and constructive. Furthermore, students will be able to communicate their skills and experiences effectively to a range of audiences from employers to investors.

Everyone is different, and success involves, in part, recognising how we are different and what our individual make-ups say about how we might live our lives well. Let's Grow underpins each personal and professional plan with a rigorous examination of ourselves, how we behave and where our ambitions lie. This approach ensures every student is given relevant information with which they can set out their goals and start to build their future.

It is common in higher education for personal and professional planning to be delivered according to year of study, with clear objectives set for each level of study. There is great merit in having clear objectives laid out for each level of study and these objectives or transferrable skills will remain as important guides to student progress. However, we will ensure our overall approach is flexible enough to take account of an individual's unique history. For instance, the employability needs of a 40-year-old first year student who has been in a middle management position for five years will be different to the needs of a 20-year-old final year student who has no experience of employment.

By providing strong interventions at year level and an "à la carte" suite of activities and support alongside the curriculum, Let's Grow has the flexibility to ensure employability services are capable of responding to individual needs.

In 2020-21 we will:

- i. Deliver an online enneagram-based questionnaire to all our students. At its core, the questionnaire measures and reports on 23 behavioural dimensions and offers developmental pathways across a range of behaviours. Each student will receive a detailed report on how they tend to behave in the world, what their strengths are and where areas of improvement are likely to be located.
- ii. Launch online discussion groups on each enneagram type, which will focus on enneagram type rather than level of study and include both students and graduates.
- iii. Enhance our annual programme of events on employability and enterprise.
- iv. Develop the communication skills of all our students and graduates in order that they better articulate their learning and experience in professional contexts, including radio training on Bloomsbury Radio.
- v. Provide one-to-one support for students making applications for jobs and further study.
- vi. Disseminate and discuss graduate employment trends with our students and graduates to ensure they are well prepared and understand the graduate jobs market.
- vii. Continue to give important voices a platform through our Lunchtime Dialogues series.
- viii. Broadcast a weekly radio programme focused on employability and graduate outcomes.

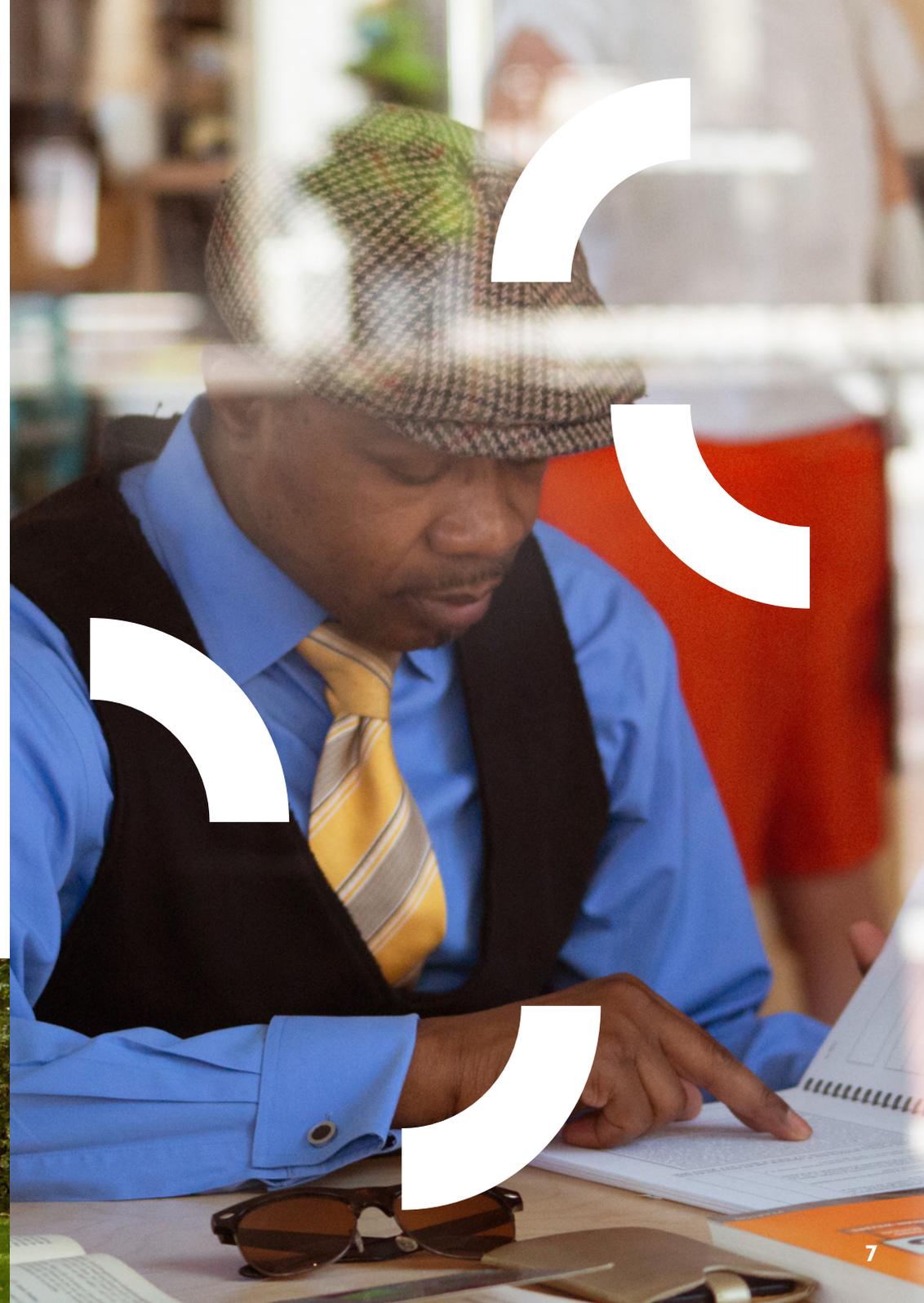
Strategic measure 2

Although embedded within our curriculum, Let's Grow is a distinct and notable feature of our provision whereby students are provided with and actively encouraged to take on opportunities to develop and apply a wide range of employability skills.

From recruitment to graduation, Let's Grow has a high profile in the student lifecycle. We ensure that students understand what their experiences mean and how they should articulate these in a work-based context. We ensure our provision is available and visible to all and embedded within the curriculum, whilst still being highlighted to our students as a distinct and important feature of their student journey.

In 2020-21 we will:

- i. Clearly communicate to students and graduates how their Bloomsbury Institute experience will enhance their graduate prospects.
- ii. Promote employability in each of our academic Schools and use Let's Grow to deliver employability enhancement.
- iii. Ensure that Graduate Skills are spoken of and discussed across the Institute on a regular basis and in an engaging and relevant way.
- iv. Participate in and report back on national and international events and discussions to inform our provision and promote our work.





Strategic measure 3

Our work is informed by global and sectoral trends. Our work in the area of employability and graduate outcomes draws upon national and international research.

Our employability and enterprise provision is delivered within constantly changing contexts not only within higher education in the UK, but also within a global and competitive job market. The Covid-19 pandemic accentuates this change in ways which are emerging all the time. Our provision will be responsive to this change, providing students with a global outlook, international opportunities and up-to-date analysis of the domestic and international job market.

In 2020-21 we will:

- i. Build upon our existing knowledge base to better support and advise students.
- ii. Continue to develop strong links with partner institutions, and other stakeholders who can provide students with global opportunities and contribute to our knowledge base.
- iii. Continue the conversation between the Academic Division and relevant Professional Services staff to ensure our degrees are globally relevant and developed with an international outlook.
- iv. Ensure that we are at the forefront of national and international debates and engaged in consultation and feedback at all levels.
- v. Utilise the experience of our international graduates and the charity we support in Paraguay to inform our way forward and globalise our provision.

Strategic measure 4

Work-related learning will be promoted, encouraged and rewarded.

In today's graduate job market work-related learning is often used as a stepping-stone for gaining employment. One of the major developments is the increasing trend among employers to use placements as a stepping-stone to the recruitment of graduates, with more than 80% of Times Top 100 businesses now offering work placements and one third of their vacancies being filled by graduates who have already worked for them (High Fliers Research Limited, 2019).

We fully support the TUC's campaign to tackle class discrimination in the workplace (www.tuc.org.uk/news/tuc-calls-ban-class-discrimination) that includes indirect forms of discrimination such as the use of unpaid placements as a gateway into employment, recognising that for many of our students an unpaid placement is not feasible. We will therefore work with employers to eliminate this discrimination and/ or provide our students with financial support during a placement.

Reflecting the importance of work experience, Let's Grow promotes opportunities to undertake some form of work-related learning. It is also important that students are supported to reflect on the experiences they gain so that they can use these to inform their career planning while articulating their learning to future prospective employers.

In 2020-21 we will:

- i. Provide a wide range of work-related learning opportunities for all our students.
- ii. Build up Bloomsbury Radio as a commercial local station which gives valuable work experience and training to our students and graduates.
- iii. Provide every participating student with an external mentor under our mentoring scheme who will help them reflect on their learning from their work experience.
- iv. Promote our academic credit-bearing internship modules.
- v. Ensure all our students have opportunities to engage in enterprise and entrepreneurship education and discussion on their degrees and as part of our extracurricular provision.
- vi. Provide access to volunteering opportunities and other forms of work experience through the Student Guild.
- vii. Develop opportunities for international work placements and a global work-related learning provision.



Strategic measure 5

Let's Grow works cross-divisionally to build key strategic partnerships involving employers, professional bodies and postgraduate study providers and contributes to building an alliance of employers who are keen to offer placements to our students and employment to our graduates.

Our links with employers, professional bodies and graduates are growing strong and there is a special emphasis on growing these further. Developing, maintaining and tracking links is a key part of ensuring we are able not only to provide relevant work-related learning opportunities for our students, but also that our degrees and employability provision reflect changes in the labour market and remain current.

In 2020-21 we will:

- i. Work towards a more cohesive approach to our engagement with employers by setting out an annual timetable of events with employers and entrepreneurs, including meetings of our Employers' and Enterprise Forum.
- ii. Work with employers who overlook our graduates in their recruitment strategies to win their support for our work and our graduates.
- iii. Further diversify our engagement with graduate recruiters by actively engaging with start-ups/micro businesses, small to medium enterprises and with a range of sectors including charities and the public sector.
- iv. Work closely with employers, entrepreneurs, support organisations and other influencers to inform our delivery and operations, for example through Course Committees and through the Employers' and Enterprise Forum.
- v. Review and update our Graduate Skills in consultation with employers and other relevant stakeholders.
- vi. (Ensure that the student and graduate businesses we help to start up have access to appropriate resources to support their sustainability and growth so that they can create work experience and employment opportunities for our students and graduates.
- vii. Ensure all our degrees have professional body recognition and that our students are made aware of the opportunities available through such recognition.
- viii. Expand the range of Birkbeck College postgraduate courses that are available to our students through our progression agreement.
- ix. Explore other postgraduate study opportunities that are available at other higher education institutions, including professional course provision, and enter into formal progression agreements.
- x. Exploit our partnership with the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) to provide students with a cost-effective pathway to achieve CMI Chartered Manager status.

Strategic measure 6

Students will be rewarded at appropriate times for taking ownership of their career development and student-centred interventions.

Student engagement is crucial to the success of Let's Grow. Our focus on rewarding students for engagement and ensuring the right interventions take place at the right time allows us to map the needs of the individual with the resources we can offer. The offer of employability support is only likely to be noticed if it is timely and feels bespoke, while we also need to ensure that students take personal responsibility for their own career development if Let's Grow is to be truly effective.

In 2020-21 we will:

- i. Work in collaboration with the Student Guild to promote key messages to targeted groups of students at specific times.
- ii. Better understand our student body and levels of engagement with employability and enterprise through analysis of engagement with the activities we offer.
- iii. Work with Professional Services staff to ensure that students engage with the opportunities available to them.
- iv. Develop systems and processes which will support the generation and analysis of better management information.
- v. Emphasise the importance to students of them taking responsibility for their own career development.





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