

Academic Policy Statement APS13

Literacy and Numeracy: Key Skills for University Study

The University is committed to widening and deepening access to Higher Education. It believes that opportunities to participate in higher education should be provided to all those with the ability to benefit.

That belief is underpinned by the University policy on quality, which commits the University to the provision of comprehensive opportunities for educational and personal development through a supportive learning environment, so that all students are enabled to develop their full potential, sharing in a continuing process of discovery and self-fulfilment.

University teaching and teaching-support strategies are designed to meet the needs of students, with care taken to ensure that learning-support is well-suited to the academic programme. The University through its Learning Framework provides a basic level of academic guidance and support on study skills as part of each academic programme. Within programmes, starting in Level 1, there are opportunities for students to learn, develop and demonstrate a range of transferable and academic skills defined by the University as Graduate Skills:

- Personal and career development
- Effective learning
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Information technology
- Numeracy

Students vary in their in their level of preparedness for study at University. The commitment to widening and deepening access carries with it, in particular, the responsibility to ensure that all students are equipped with the requisite literacy and numeracy key skills to complete their programmes of study successfully. In this context, literacy encompasses communication and study skills eg. essay preparation, information handling, and textual analysis in addition to language skills. Numeracy refers to skills required to complete student programmes - the ability to interpret quantitative information (graphs, formulae, charts and tables) as used in the subject area being studied.

The University is strongly committed to embedding a corporate and systematic approach to the support of literacy and numeracy for those students who are judged to need it, The firm objective is to develop and enhance a supportive University culture for the delivery of that provision, where the benefits are accepted without prejudice and as a matter of course in ensuring that students complete their programmes of study equipped for career and personal progression beyond the University.

In implementing this policy the University will adhere to the following principles

- Ensure that each academic programme includes provision for the delivery of the range of transferable and academic skills referred to above.

- Offer pre-sessional English language for overseas students and literacy and numeracy programmes. Prospective students who have not achieved the necessary English Language entry requirements will be encouraged to take the programmes in order to achieve the necessary entry requirement.
- University diagnostic tests on literacy and numeracy will be available to all students during the admissions and enrolment period. Students will be encouraged to take the tests if they feel that their basic literacy and/or numeracy skills may impede their progress on their chosen programmes of study within the Learning Framework.
- Specialist support will be available in Learning Resources on each campus for help and advice in this regard, for both students and staff
- progression committees may insist on basic literacy (including communication skills) and/or numeracy training if it is clear that an individual student's progress is impaired by the lack of such skills.
- Referral to the appropriate support will be followed by further diagnostic testing and direction on to a tailored/short term support programme as required. At this stage attendance both for diagnostic testing and for the follow-on provision will be compulsory for all students identified by the progression committees.

This policy was approved by Academic Board at its meeting on 20 November 1996. It was due for review in November 2001. The review was deferred due to the need to evaluate the introduction of compulsory graduate skills modules at Level 1.

A revised version was approved by Academic Board on 19 March 2003. It is due for review in March 2008.

This revised version was approved by Academic Board in November 2008 and is due for review in November 2011