

Learning Policy

1. Background & Purpose

The Learning Policy at UTC reflects the fact that we are a ‘Workplace for Learning’.

Our Mission Statement sets the context for the foundation of the policy:

‘We will engage with people to realise their potential through the innovative development of skills and learning which inspires sustainable futures for both students and employers.’

At the UTC we aim to:-

- Provide a safe, stimulating and productive learning environment which enables everyone to develop as individuals in all aspects of life
- Enable students to achieve their full potential by learning in a variety of ways and through challenging learning experiences
- Provide a relevant work-related curriculum that will motivate, engage and challenge students and also equip them with the necessary skills to become a valued member of society.

A key element of this is our themed approach to learning whereby identified projects set by our employers form the focal point for the whole curriculum. This means that all members of staff have to be responsive to linking curriculum threads together to ensure that the needs of employers and examination boards are adequately met.

2. Aims of this Policy

This policy aims to provide a framework for ensuring that we:-

- raise standards
- raise levels of achievement
- raise students’ expectations of their own performance
- maintain the highest standards of behaviour in all aspects of UTC life
- offer every student the opportunity to become an effective student and to succeed academically, socially, culturally and physically
- have a learning environment and practices that are inclusive
- develop the following key aspects of learning; enquiry; problem solving; creative thinking; information processing; reasoning; evaluation; self-awareness; motivation; empathy; social skills and communication

All members of staff at the UTC have the responsibility to coach young people in a variety of ways. This may be to pass an academic qualification, develop a technical skill, or to behave in an appropriate manner, but we view all these as important in developing the student and helping them to reach their full potential.

3. Teaching and Coaching

It is important that all those associated with the UTC understands how teaching and coaching combine to provide a highly effective structure for learning to take place.

Teaching can be defined as:-

‘a process for passing on information about given subjects or disciplines that are accepted worldwide as valid and not contested’

Coaching can be defined as:-

‘a cyclical, on-going interaction. In order to coach someone, you need to first teach them something, then observe the student, and then provide feedback’

These definitions must inform how Teachers interact with the students at the UTC. It is important that learning is structured in order that all students make rapid and sustained progress.

4. Planning, Preparation and Procedures

Teachers should ensure that:-

- Students follow the UTC Code of Conduct
- Seating arrangements are conducive to productive learning
- The learning objectives are clearly displayed in order to inform the students of what they will know, understand and be able to do by the end of the session, and how this will be evidenced
- Sessions are planned using clear three-part structures, when appropriate, of a starter to focus the attention of the students, the development of learning objectives and a plenary to summarise/assess learning and help students to understand how to improve
- Sessions are planned which allow students to develop and practise higher order thinking skills such as creativity, analysis, problem solving, decision making and application
- The sessions are differentiated for varying needs by task, resources, outcomes and / or method
- The sessions provide pace and challenge for all students
- Use is made of stimulating resources relevant to the termly themes including the use of ICT and specialist equipment which are differentiated as appropriate for the students

5. Learning Styles

Teachers should use strategies which:-

- Allow students to learn using a variety of learning styles i.e. visual, auditory or kinaesthetic
- Allow students to work both independently and collaboratively, and which contribute to one another’s learning
- Use positive behaviour management and encouragement for students to achieve, including praise and rewards

6. Assessment, Recording and Reporting – see also policy VLT P06

Teachers should:-

- Provide assessment opportunities, and appropriate assessment activities during every learning session, in order to inform the learning process
- Incorporate the use of peer and/or self-assessment by the students to enable them to have ownership of their learning and progress

- Use analysis of assessments to inform future sessions and support students' progress.
- Use data to ensure students are working at their full potential and set targets to achieve this
- Inform parents/carers and appropriate staff within the UTC of students' progress or under-achievement

7. Learning Support

Teachers should:-

- Be aware of the specific learning needs of their students; eg. dyslexia, gifted and talented, EAL, autism
- Consult with SENCo about the needs of individual students when appropriate
- Collaborate with other staff to ensure students are supported in their learning. Ensure that Learner Passports are updated and used as working documents

8. Continuing Professional Development – see also policy VLT P17

Teachers should:-

- Continuously update their subject knowledge and pedagogy in line with current developments and initiatives and be prepared to share this with colleagues
- Plan their own CPD programme in conjunction with their line manager as a result of the Performance Management Process and link this to the overall CPD Plan for the UTC

9. Learning

All members of staff should have the highest expectations of all students.

They should expect students to:-

- Be prepared for sessions by having the correct equipment
- Take pride in their work through consistent expectations across the curriculum for neat and accurate presentation of their work
- Make a positive contribution to discussions
- Follow the UTC Standard Operational Procedures
- Take responsibility for improving their own learning
- Ask for help if required
- Be fully involved in the learning activities
- Be sensitive and respectful to the needs of others
- Be able to cooperate with others
- Use higher order questioning, thinking and communication skills
- Extend their learning beyond the UTC

Teachers should:-

- Work with sense of common purpose and show commitment to a shared vision
- Value students' achievements and high standards of attainment
- Believe that all students can learn and be successful
- Be open to continuous learning themselves
- Have a shared and developing understanding of how students learn

- Establish effective systems to check that learning is taking place as effectively as possible in order to facilitate general and individual improvements in teaching and learning
- Recognise that there are variables that can affect an individual student's ability to learn e.g. social skills and behaviour, access to appropriate resources, cognitive skills
- Recognise that students as individuals have their own preferred learning styles i.e. visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic
- Consider provision for different students e.g. those who have Special Educational Needs or are gifted and talented in any particular area

10. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Quality of Learning

Monitoring and evaluation principally takes place through team reviews and observation of learning sessions. Formal reviews of learning take place every term in order to get an overall view of standards throughout the UTC. These reviews may focus on particular issues or to offer support where the need for development has been identified.

Purpose of Reviews:-

- To identify and share good practice.
- Evaluate the performance of teachers in line with OfSTED criteria and set targets for improvement
- Track progress on identified learning issues.
- Identify key aspects of pedagogy for development by teams and for the UTC as a whole
- Identify teachers in need of support
- Standardise monitoring procedures including session observation and work scrutiny

Monitoring and evaluation of learning is a responsibility for all and everybody has a role to play in undertaking it.

The Principal is responsible for the effective delivery of all subjects, evaluating the quality of delivery and standards of students' achievements and setting targets for improvement.

She must:-

- Evaluate learning and the planning of sessions in order to lead action for improvement
- Ensure curriculum coverage and progress for all students
- Establish and implement clear practices for assessing, recording and reporting on student progress and setting targets for future improvement within their subjects in line with the UTC policy – see VLT P06
- Analyse and interpret data on students' performance against UTC expectations and other comparative data; eg. RaiseOnline
- Monitor students' progress by work scrutiny to ensure quality, consistency and to implement strategies for improvement
- Observe teachers' sessions in the teams in accordance with the UTC observation schedule and give constructive feedback. This will also inform the Performance Management of the teachers

Teachers are responsible for the progress of students in their groups and for self-evaluating their own professional development.

They will achieve this by:-

- Self-evaluating their subject knowledge and understanding of current education initiatives

- Self-evaluating the quality and effectiveness of their own performance
- Working collaboratively with colleagues to improve their pedagogical skills

11. Monitoring Impact & Review

- The consistent application and enforcement of an effective policy and the resulting procedures by all staff, with suitable monitoring to ensure this, can improve the achievement and effort of individual students and thus contribute to the overall college picture
- The implementation, coordination and monitoring of the Learning Policy is the responsibility of the Principal working with the Executive Principal and the Board of Directors
- This policy is a working document and therefore is open to change and restructuring as and when the need arises
- The policy is to be reviewed annually and is linked to the Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy (VLT P06), Special Educational Needs Policy (VLT P10) and Continuing Professional Development Policy (VLT P17)