

# Professional development Weeks Policy

## 1. Objectives

1.1 The objectives of this policy are to

- Set parameters within which faculties may wish to schedule professional development weeks for their students,
- Help to promote a positive academic experience for students by ensuring that professional development weeks support inclusive student learning,
- Ensure there is effective governance of professional development weeks,
- Ensure that information regarding professional development weeks is communicated effectively to students and effectively timetabled.

## 2. Rationale

2.1 Professional development weeks should support personalised learning amongst students, with students having a variety of optional timetabled activities. They should support positive student outcomes, such as continuation, attainment and progression to appropriate employment or further study. Acceptable purposes for the weeks are to support:

- Employability
- Catch-up and consolidation of learning
- Academic skills development, assessment/feedback literacy and exam support
- Development of academic communities
- Student reflection on their learning and student voice activity arising from this

2.2 Professional development weeks, where used, must be properly planned, with additional activities offered, to ensure that all students experience benefits from the week, though these may be different in nature.

## 3. Consistency

3.1 Whether there is a professional development week should be consistent across faculties where possible, as this prevents confusion and dissatisfaction where modules are shared between programmes. Faculties are therefore asked to agree a collective position, though faculties may delegate this to school level where there are few programmes that span schools.

3.2 Where PSRB content requirements or placement patterns make the use of a professional development week difficult for programmes, faculties/schools may provide exemptions from their position, but the extent to which this may be required should be considered in coming to the overall faculty/school position.

3.3 While we consider faculty-level to be the most appropriate level of consistency in general, some programmes span faculties. It is therefore important that professional development weeks are held in line with the dates in the Academic Calendar, with a maximum of one per taught term, and that the weeks are coordinated between faculties where this is the case.

## 4. Considerations in adopting professional development weeks

4.1 In considering whether to schedule a professional development week, a faculty/school should judge whether they can still provide sufficient student contact hours in a term to ensure student academic success and to meet PSRB requirements. The benefits of a professional development week

as detailed above must always be balanced against the loss of a teaching week and consideration should be made of which is going to provide students with the more supportive context for successful outcomes.

4.2 The following considerations should feed into that judgement:

- Student attainment from previous academic years
- Feedback from student representatives and Faculty Officers
- Coherence of plans to support personalised learning during the weeks

4.3 Although no formal teaching is scheduled during a professional development week, the period should be used to contribute to student learning outcomes. They will therefore require the same level of staff resource as a normal teaching week, though this may be distributed differently.

## 5. Governance

5.1 Faculty Student Success Committees (FSSCs) are responsible for deciding whether professional development weeks will be held in their faculty in the following academic year and whether they will be held in all teaching terms of a programme.

5.2. Where relevant, FSSCs will also oversee any decision-making that has been delegated to school-level.

5.3 FSSCs are responsible for overseeing the success of the weeks, through reviewing feedback from student representatives and gaining assurance that the weeks are planned in ways that will maximise student learning.

5.4 Faculty-level decisions for the following academic year, along with their rationale, will be reported to and approved by Student Success Board.

5.5 Alongside faculty decisions, Student Success Board will receive a report on faculty monitoring of the success of any weeks in the current academic year.

## 6. Communications

6.1 Whether students in a faculty will have a professional development week should be communicated to students in advance along with the anticipated benefits of the decision. Details of sessions during the week should be outlined in students' Programme and Module Handbooks, and on any work that students will be requested to complete.

6.2 Professional development week activities should be clearly stated in a programme's annual timetabling submission and observe the principles set out in the Teaching Timetabling and Room Booking Policy.

## 7. Relationship with existing policies

7.1 This policy has been formulated within the context of the university's [This is our Time: University of Greenwich Strategy 2021-2030](#).

Key documents which have a direct impact on this policy are:

- [Teaching Timetabling and Room Booking Policy](#),
- [Student Success sub-strategy](#)