



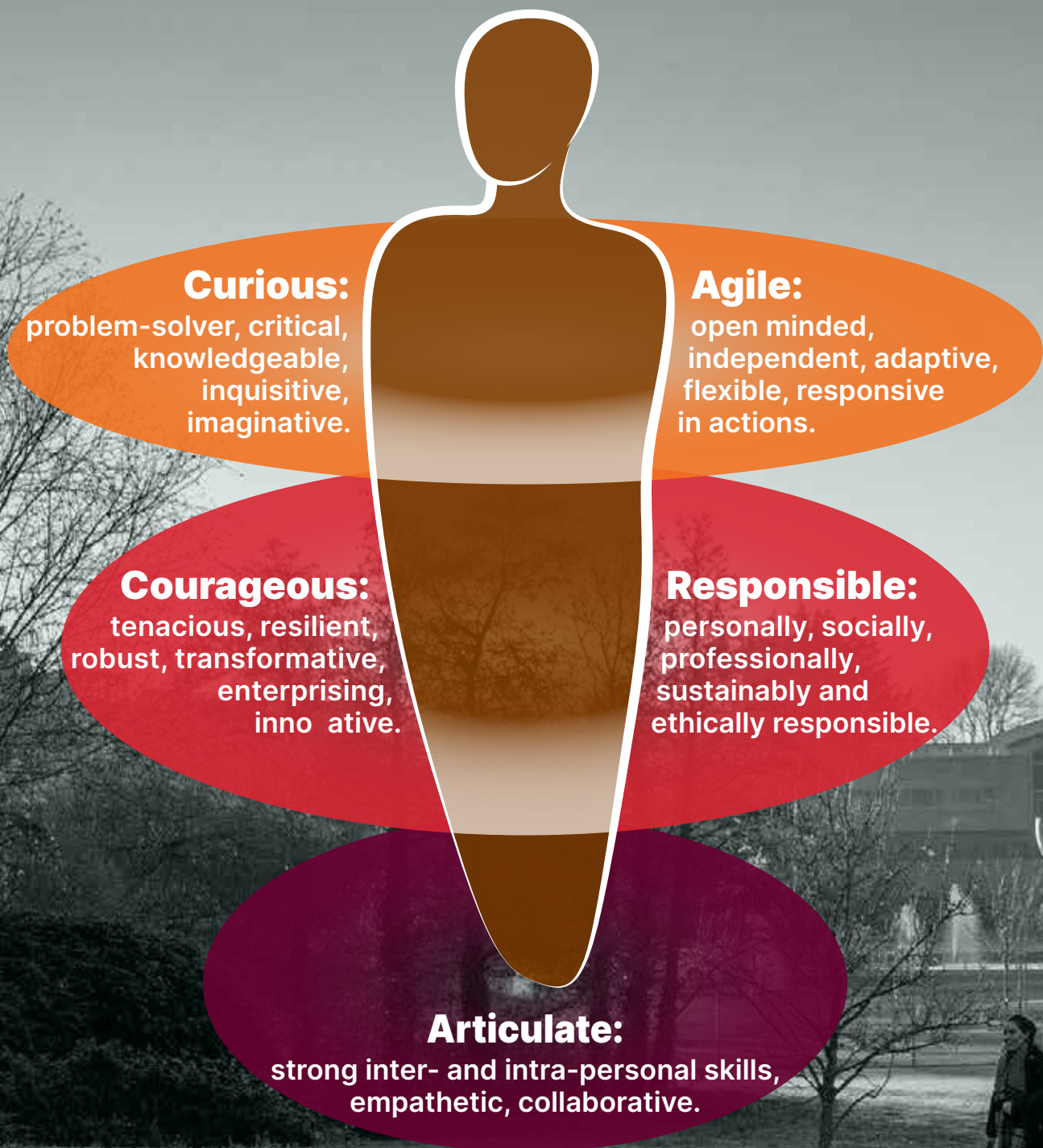
# Action For *Wisdom*

## Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2022–2027



# The UL Graduate

The UL Graduate is an active and globally engaged citizen.



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# Introduction

**University of Limerick (UL) is a research-led, energetic and enterprising institution with a proud record of innovation and excellence in education and scholarship. Creativity, curiosity and excellence imbue our inclusive community, which is committed to social good.**

Renowned for providing an outstanding student experience and conducting leading-edge research, we now host more than 19,000 students. Established in 1972, UL's purpose has been built on providing students with relevant and excellent research-based undergraduate and postgraduate programmes that prepare them for employment via work-integrated learning and teaching, international mobility and responsive academic and support staff.

Having celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> year, our strategic plan, [UL@50](#), commits to Transforming Education with 'an academic model that delivers flexible learning, responds to and shapes national and international student aspirations and addresses regional and national skills needs by building on our strengths in research, cooperative education and work-integrated learning, and educates professional leaders for the future.' Student success is central to this mission. This *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2022-27* provides the template for Transforming Education at UL through our approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.

As an international, research-led university, we are committed to ensuring that our academic programmes are student-centred in design and delivery and prepare our students to tackle the major societal challenges that face humanity, whilst simultaneously instilling the confidence needed to continually reskill and upskill over their lives.

UL empowers our students, graduates and staff to be 'active citizens', who contribute to the wellbeing and future of our planet. This is achieved through our commitment to the development and implementation of a holistic approach to sustainable development, in partnership with the communities we serve, and through our national and international alliances. This supports the UL Mission Based Sustainability Framework 2030 which underscores 'the need for Universities to play their role in exploring, envisioning, and experimenting across, and within, all sectors of society.'

Our sustained and pioneering tradition of work-based, integrated learning and teaching at undergraduate level includes work, clinical and school placements, field trips, and practical and virtual micro-internships, which are delivered by our Cooperative Education and Careers Division (CECD) in collaboration with a range of global partners. At undergraduate and postgraduate level, work-integrated learning and teaching supports the future of work, generating new design frameworks and pathways including the use of microcredentials, co-located programmes and apprenticeships, all of which help to advance lifelong learning, sustainable development and professional growth in a digital age.

**We are committed to preparing our students to tackle the major societal challenges that face humanity.**



This strategy takes account of the challenges presented by a future world of work characterised by complexity, disruption and unpredictability. We are aware that, for most graduates, their careers will play out in the context of decentralised teams, flatter organisational structures, ambiguous role definition and a global milieu. We are committed to preparing our graduates to navigate fluid career pathways that may involve yet unknown roles, jobs and even sectors. The strategy will support our students in developing the future graduate capital required to thrive in this shifting context.

Our programmes of study are informed by our research and are designed to offer our students and graduates the opportunity to build the attributes that reflect the values fostered by UL: curiosity, creativity and academic excellence in an inclusive community which is committed to social good.

The review and revision of Graduate Attributes was facilitated through active consultation with students and staff through two open, online consultations, in addition to engagements with Faculty Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committees in the Kemmy Business School; Science and Engineering; Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; the Integrated Curriculum Development Framework Working Group; CECD; Student Life and the Postgraduate Student Union. The process was informed by international best practice and frameworks such as the UNESCO Transversal Competencies, Future Skills identified by the World Economic Forum (2020) and the Graduate Market Survey of the Employers by the Association of Higher Education Careers Services (2021).

# Transforming the Curriculum

## AIM

- 1 Adopt an Integrated Curriculum Development Framework (ICDF) that embeds the synergy between teaching and research through research-led, challenge driven, experiential, collaborative learning modes and fosters cross-disciplinary sharing and exchange.

## ACTION

Implement the ICDF to guide and support programme development, mapping content, pedagogy and learning for sustainability, in line with national and international standards to ensure clear and streamlined academic programmes.

## OUTCOME

UL programmes that will be dynamic and co-constructed, with a responsive and sustainably responsible curriculum that provides an enhanced, accessible, quality-assured student learning experience in the development of skills and knowledge for the future of work.

## AIM

- 2 Embed the revised Graduate Attributes in all programme development.

## ACTION

Adopt a staged approach to the integration of Graduate Attributes as part of programme development/ review through the ICDF.

Develop and facilitate a series of inter-faculty CPD events to discuss ways to embed the Graduate Attributes in all programme development.

## OUTCOME

Programmes of study that offer students opportunities to develop and demonstrate the Graduate Attributes over the course of their studies through formative and summative assessment.

## AIM

- 3 Embed a sustainable inter-/cross-/trans-disciplinary approach to programmes where appropriate.

## ACTION

Encourage sustainable inter-/cross-/trans-disciplinarity through innovative assessment approaches that develop student skills.

## OUTCOME

An evidenced-based cross-/inter-/trans-disciplinary approach to programme design, delivery and assessment.



## **4** **AIM** Advance employability at the core of our curricula.

### **ACTION**

Generate new design frameworks and pathways co-created with industry, using new approaches including microcredentials, academies of learning, co-located and co-designed programmes, immersive learning, and apprenticeships (dual education), all of which help to advance mission-based learning, sustainable development and professional growth in a digital age.

In line with planned expansion in undergraduate numbers, engage in intensive collaboration with employer partners to extend provision of transformative experiential learning through Cooperative Education and increase the diversity of employer reach by sector, discipline and geography.

Enhance the development of transversal postgraduate skills through the inclusion of work integrated learning opportunities on all postgraduate curricula.

### **OUTCOME**

Expansion in the number of programmes that incorporate new approaches including microcredentials, co-located and co-designed programmes, immersive learning, and apprenticeships (dual education) to transform the employability of our graduates in Industry 4.0 and in future are co-certified.

Expansion of undergraduate Cooperative Education opportunities across the criteria of student numbers, employer diversity, industry sector, country of placement, discipline and sustainability.

Harnessing of the 'disruptive power' of innovative learning experiences to support undergraduates and postgraduates in developing their future graduate capital.



## **5** **AIM** Increase the global dimension of our employability provision.

### **ACTION**

Extend global experiential learning opportunities across discipline, sector and geographic region.

Drive collaboration with international, national and local professional networks for cooperative and work-integrated learning and graduate employability.

Manage the Erasmus+ work traineeship programme to provide financial support to students undertaking placements across the EU and European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

Collaborate with our international, national and local partners on the full roll-out of a new mechanism for short-term, virtual global opportunities, congruent with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### **OUTCOME**

A rich network of global experiential learning opportunities.

A high UL profile across relevant national and national and international professional associations.

Maintain UL's leading position as the largest participating higher education institution in the Erasmus+ work traineeship programme.

Increased student participation in the Global Challenges programme with SDG-focused virtual placements.

## **6** **AIM** Advance internationalisation at home in our programmes of study and the internationalisation of our campus communities.

### **ACTION**

Expand and embed a global perspective, an intercultural awareness and internationalisation in the learning experience across all programmes.

Embed virtual communication exchanges as an alternative for students who are unable to engage in mobility, and as a means to achieving a more sustainable approach.

### **OUTCOME**

Enhanced intercultural awareness and competencies in UL programmes of study.

Greater opportunities for virtual exchanges that support the sustainability agenda.



**AIM**  
**7** Integrate a new curriculum management system (CMS) with the student records system in a manner that supports the transformation of the curriculum.

**ACTION**

Replacement of the Academic Programme Review Committee (APRC) workflow with a new CMS.

**OUTCOME**

A CMS that integrates with the student records system and facilitates the timely reform and restructuring/renewal of the entire UL-taught undergraduate and postgraduate portfolio (3,350 modules).

**AIM**  
**8** Establish a Curriculum Review and Innovation Committee (CRIC) for the process of programme approval.

**ACTION**

Transform the APRC to include a wider remit for all programme development/termination and accreditation processes.

**OUTCOME**

Enhanced, streamlined programme accreditation, established through a comprehensive framework for the development, approval and regular quality review of new programmes, by engaging with employers and industry sectors, e.g. via CECD, research, Graduate and Professional Studies, faculties etc.

**AIM**  
**9** Standardise the awards framework.

**ACTION**

Review and revise the size of the curriculum through analysis of evidence-based options in relation to standard full and part time academic models and the basic credit unit.

**OUTCOME**

Standardisation of awards and the consistent and coherent grading of bands, rules and grades/criteria across all programmes.

**AIM**  
**10** Scope the potential for micro-credentials to be fully supported within the student record system.

**ACTION**

Establish micro-credential project business requirement.  
Design the micro-credential project definition, development and implementation.

**OUTCOME**

Progress the UL micro-credential project scope and business case to the Digital Governance Steering Committee for consideration.

# Transforming Teaching

## AIM

**1** Establish a mechanism to develop the professionalisation of all those who teach, in order to realise their potential and to recognise and value teaching excellence and expertise.

## ACTION

Scope the level of implementation of the national professional development framework across the Irish university sector that coherently recognises continuing professional development (CPD) for all those who teach.

Embed an appropriate professional development framework to align relevant institutional processes for the recognition and validation of teaching expertise and excellence, with clarity on the use of formative development opportunities and more formal HR processes to allow for development and recognition of teaching mastery.

Revise the annual progression and promotions scheme to ensure transparency in line with international benchmarking across all academic domains.

## OUTCOME

A coherent and consistent mechanism for recognition of professional development and teaching excellence in line with an approved framework.

Accredited and unaccredited CPD for all those who teach, with time and space allocated at departmental level to allow for greater visibility of teaching excellence and ability, while acknowledging the role of those who lead programme teams and provide support through professional development opportunities.

A robust, fair and performance and merit based progression policy, with clear benchmarks for minimum performance across those who teach, in line with a framework for academic workload allocation/Performance and Development Review System.

## AIM

**2** Enhance the mechanisms for engaging with student feedback for an improved student learning experience.

## ACTION

Revise the feedback framework (currently Module Satisfaction Survey and Student Evaluation of Teaching) to allow for one student feedback mechanism that feeds into programme design and delivery.

Integrate feedback from sources such as StudentSurvey.ie, external examiners and employers more fully into the annual programme monitoring and periodic review processes.

## OUTCOME

A systematic framework for student feedback that enables the feedback loop to be acknowledged, actioned and closed in a transparent and open manner at module level.

Robust engagement with StudentSurvey.ie feedback in the periodic and annual review of programmes.



**3** **AIM**  
Establish new learner analytics capabilities and supports to inform and enhance teaching, learning and assessment.

**ACTION**

Develop a strategy for implementation of the Policy on the Use of Data to Enhance Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Learning Analytics) to support curriculum development, design and delivery and student success through generation of a Teaching Learning and Assessment Dataset available centrally in the Data Warehouse.

**OUTCOME**

Established guidelines for the utilisation of Learning Analytics in diverse cohorts that are compliant with UL Learning Analytics policy.

Exploration and exploitation of Learning Analytics functionality in new virtual learning environments (VLEs) to facilitate interventions intended to impact positively on student success through curriculum design and delivery.

**4** **AIM**  
Ensure accessibility to the university and learning experience for all students.

**ACTION**

Embed and enact Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in programme design and delivery to ensure an accessible learning, teaching and assessment experience that is inclusive in language, material and approach.

Continue to monitor services to ensure that they support the needs of the increasingly diverse and internationalised student body, in terms of both cultural background and mode of learning.

**OUTCOME**

UDL micro-credentials offered to faculty and student interns.

Supports established in relation to embedding a UDL approach within both programme design, delivery and the students' overall university experience.

UDL Community of Practice further embedded across the campus.

**5** **AIM**  
Embed an enhanced student-centred, programme-level assessment, grading and feedback model.

**ACTION**

Review assessment modes at programme level, with a view to increasing cumulative assessments and ensuring timely feedback.

Develop a policy on student grading and feedback in line with international best practice.

**OUTCOME**

Streamlined, transparent, programme-level assessment, grading and feedback processes embedded across the faculties.

Grading and feedback policies implemented across programmes.

**6** **AIM**  
Uphold, cultivate and embed a culture of academic integrity.

**ACTION**

Scope best practice in creating a culture of academic integrity across the Irish higher education sector through engagement with QQI National Academic Integrity Network activities.

**OUTCOME**

Policy and procedures in place that embed academic integrity in programme design of traditional and authentic assessments.

Academic integrity unit established to promote and support implementation of academic integrity procedures.





# Inclusive Student Engagement and Support

## **1** **AIM** Enhance and tailor support for our diversifying student body.

### **ACTION**

Implement through facilitating initiatives at faculty level and working with students to establish gaps in collaboration with the Student Engagement and Success team.

Establish diversity of the student population and identify needs for adopting teaching and support provisions through available analytics.

### **OUTCOME**

A process for student interns established to act as partners in providing interfaculty support on whole- university initiatives through promoting engagement and exchange, and to help design meaningful interventions that will improve student success and retention.

Teaching and support monitoring in place for the diverse student population to determine the effectiveness of the initiatives.

## **2** **AIM** Develop a student academic advisor support framework that reflects the learning landscape post-pandemic.

### **ACTION**

Conduct an action-oriented review and refresh of the current academic advisor model with recognition of associated challenges and opportunities for the UL community.

### **OUTCOME**

An enhanced academic advisor support framework that more completely and inclusively supports students and reflects the evolving student context.

## **3** **AIM** Enhance inclusive learning and teaching spaces to maximise potential for student engagement.

### **ACTION**

Conduct an audit of university learning and teaching spaces in consultation with scheduling staff, with scarce flexible spaces to be made available for scheduled and unscheduled student contact and project time.

Develop flexible learning spaces in support of student-centred, technology-enhanced and enabled teaching approaches.

### **OUTCOME**

An institutional-level process established to facilitate the ongoing integration and systematic enhancement of UL learning and teaching spaces.

Reimagined, flexible learning and teaching spaces and scheduling in place for critical student contact time such as laboratory, practical, problem-based sessions.

**AIM**

## 4 Engage with students as key stakeholders in the enhancement of the student learning experience and to increase personalised learning opportunities.

**ACTION**

Review the effectiveness of the current model of student participation within and across UL.

Harness the students' perspective through active participation and collaboration in relevant fora.

**OUTCOME**

An enhanced student-centred and connected learning experience with avenues for engagement in authentic and personalised assessment.

**AIM**

## 5 Embed student-led learning through educational technology provision and the development of pedagogies for blended and online programmes of study.

**ACTION**

Support VLE implementation through pedagogical design, development and engagement with course teams.

Explore opportunities to maximise the impact of available learning technologist resources.

**OUTCOME**

New VLE operational.

Exploitation of VLE ecosystem potential to support academic transformation and systematic review.

Optimise the VLE to increase the use of learning resources.

**AIM**

## 6 Provide student learning supports in the digital space across the disciplines.

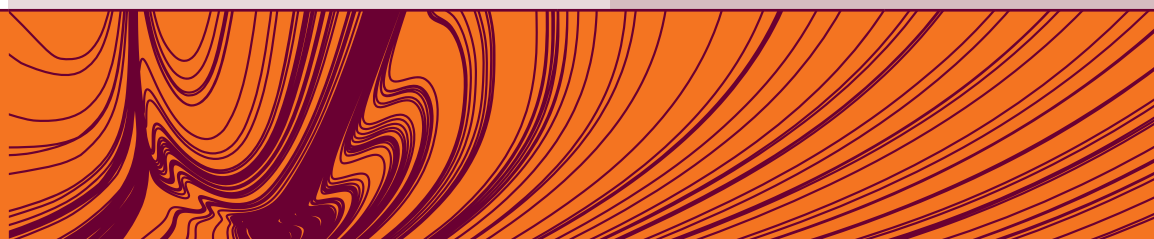
**ACTION**

Enhance key disciplinary and effective pedagogic approaches, methods and tools to support students effectively and to enhance retention and progression.

**OUTCOME**

Continued provision of access to support by the five UL Learning Centres via an expanded Digital Learner Support Hub that evolves to meet student needs.

Increased engagement with institutional digital resources.





**7** **AIM**  
Facilitate and promote the development of digital skills through the design and delivery of bespoke professional development for students.

**ACTION**

Provide and embed professional development and support to increase student digital skills and competency, in line with the European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp).

**OUTCOME**

Mainstreaming of sustainable and professional development initiatives, resulting in improved competence in using digital technologies, finding and using information resources, creation of new digital resources all important skills for learning, research, employment and lifelong learning.

Standardise library's information skills programme at key stages of the student life cycle and tailor to disciplinary needs.

Embed skills development at programme level.

**8** **AIM**  
Harness the potential of emerging technologies to support all students in their career preparation, career decision-making and self-management.

**ACTION**

Scope out the potential for emerging technologies to support students in their career preparation, career decision-making and self-management.

**OUTCOME**

Technology-supported provision that encourages self-directed career development learning and optimises the outcomes of face-to-face consultations during their studies in UL and beyond.

**9** **AIM**  
Support the delivery of flexible learning programmes by introducing a new academic model that has provision to start at different times during the academic year.

**ACTION**

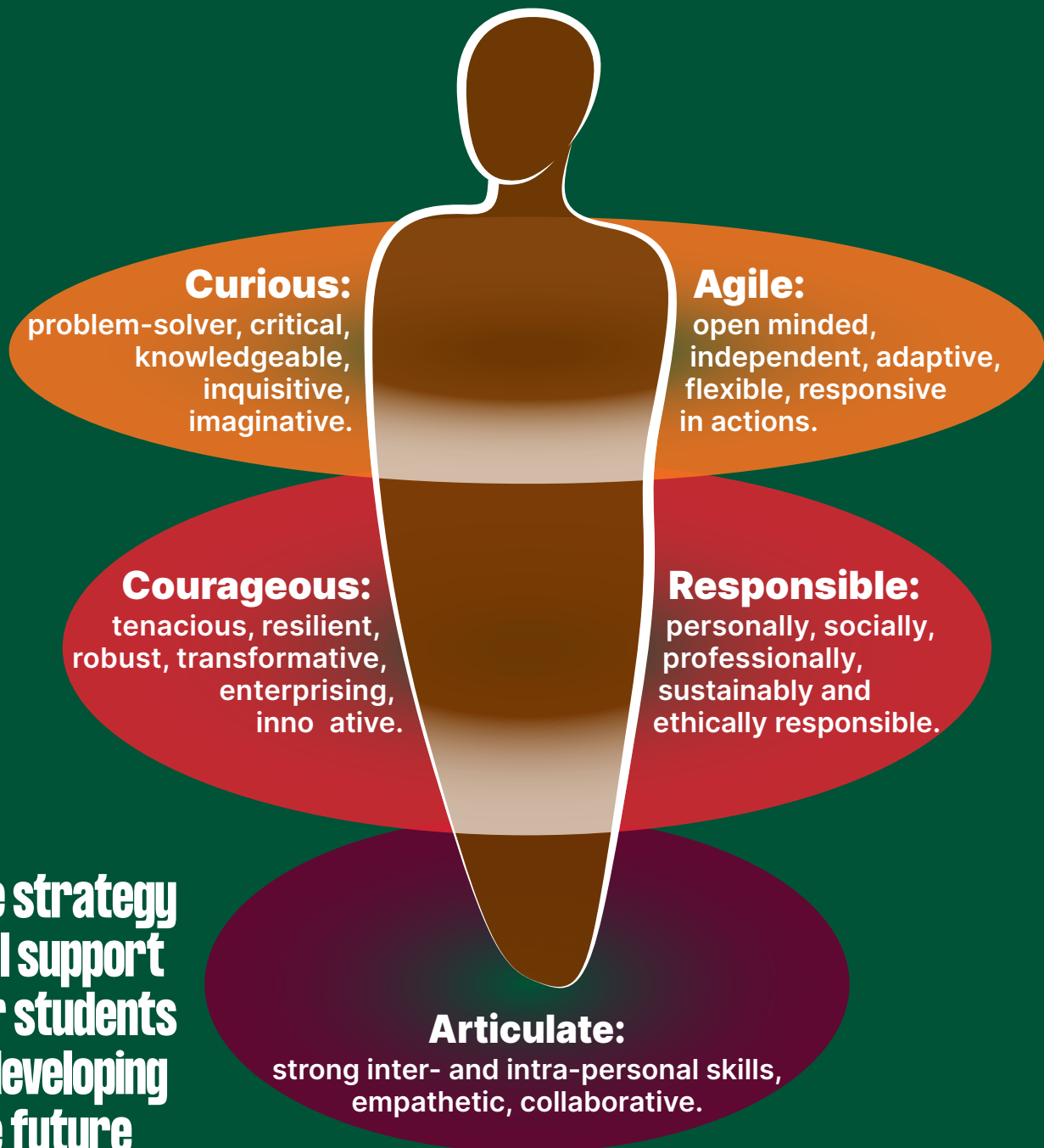
Enhanced programme development to support growth of popular taught postgraduate programmes.

**OUTCOME**

Greater flexibility of programme delivery resulting in enhanced student learning experiences.

# The UL Graduate

The UL Graduate is an active and globally engaged citizen.



The strategy will support our students in developing the future graduate capital required to thrive.

[#StudyAtUL](#)