



**St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London**

Promoting the Mission through the Curriculum – Vision 2030

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Pre-amble

This paper describes the philosophy and strategy of St. Mary's University in relation to the promotion of its Catholic identity and mission through the curriculum. It is one of the papers designed to support Vision 2030. It has resulted from a number of internal discussions and consultations. However, it is a “living” document which can be developed and updated in response to both internal and external feedback.

A different form of the paper has been discussed in various University committees and informed the development of Vision 2030.

Introduction

The paper presents the intellectual underpinnings of the Catholic mission of the University highlights ideas for its implementation through the curriculum. It begins with some descriptive context regarding the Catholic Church's own view of higher education as well as drawing on Anglican document “Faith in Higher Education”. The second part of the paper describes how the University has expressed its own view of its mission as a Catholic university in its policies and strategies that have already passed through University governance procedures following full consultation.

The third part of the paper indicates current and likely future developments in relation to teaching and learning that will better embed the mission within the life of the University. The paper is not exhaustive in that respect. It does not include each and every possible initiative as that would make it too extensive. It also does not include elements of St. Mary's activities that are well under way and fundamental to our mission (such as our work in education that has been integral since our foundation). This paper also does not cover research. Some specific initiatives have been chosen that are important for the mission and which have been discussed in other forums and already have support.

In a University which is both diverse and inclusive, there will not be full agreement on how the mission of the University should be expressed. And all may not agree on the understanding of knowledge and the purpose of a University that is expressed by the Catholic Church or in our own documents. Academic freedom is paramount, and the paper is not indicating to academics what they should think and believe. Instead, it is describing how the Catholic Church has already expressed the mission of a Catholic



university and how the University itself has already expressed its own view of its mission: there is no new material in this document in this respect. This document can be used as a basis for discussion to try to move towards a shared understanding. It is also important to note that the development of the mission of the University in teaching and learning is not new: it was a founding feature of the University nearly 175 years ago.

Section one: How the Catholic Church understands Catholic higher education

It is important that the University is attractive to students and staff and provides a genuine and wholehearted welcome to all whilst, at the same time, effectively articulating its mission and vision. This approach is reflected in the launch of the “Global Compact on Education” by Pope Francis in May 2020. Addressing all people of goodwill, he said:

This meeting will rekindle our dedication for and with young people, renewing our passion for a more open and inclusive education, including patient listening, constructive dialogue and better mutual understanding. Never before has there been such need to unite our efforts in a broad educational alliance, to form mature individuals capable of overcoming division and antagonism, and to restore the fabric of relationships for the sake of a more fraternal humanity.

The global compact asks us to ensure that the human person is placed at the centre of education and that we educate our students to be of service to others. This is illustrated by a specific Biblical example. Pope Francis stated that educating our students should involve:

bending over those in need and stretching out a hand to them, without calculation, without fear, but with tenderness and understanding, just as Jesus knelt to wash the Apostles’ feet. Serving means working beside the neediest of people, establishing with them first and foremost human relationships of closeness and bonds of solidarity”.

Indeed, most would agree that this is one of many laudable aspects of the St. Mary’s University academic community.

In developing our Catholic mission through the curriculum, we can draw on the Church’s own documents. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, published in 1990 by Pope St. John Paul II, states the origin and purpose of the University at the very beginning:

Born from the heart of the Church, a Catholic University is located in that course of tradition which may be traced back to the very origin of the University as an institution. It has always been recognized as an incomparable centre of creativity and dissemination of knowledge for the good of humanity. By vocation, the *Universitas magistrorum et scholarium* is dedicated to research, to teaching and to the education of students who freely associate with their teachers in a common love of knowledge.

Of course, few universities would do other than claim that they agree with these sentiments (after the first few words). However, the document continues (7):



a Catholic University is called in a particular way to respond to this need: its Christian inspiration enables it to include the moral, spiritual and religious dimension in its research, and to evaluate the attainments of science and technology in the perspective of the totality of the human person.

The same would apply to teaching of course and, in a university with an applied focus, by developing such a philosophy in teaching, we can prepare students for the world of work.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae goes on to say: “In a word, being both a University and Catholic, it must be both a community of scholars representing various branches of human knowledge, and an academic institution in which Catholicism is vitally present and operative” (14).

Ex Corde Ecclesiae also stresses the importance of inter-disciplinarity:

While each discipline is taught systematically and according to its own methods, interdisciplinary studies, assisted by a careful and thorough study of philosophy and theology, enable students to acquire an organic vision of reality and to develop a continuing desire for intellectual progress. (20)

We could perhaps sum up this philosophy as follows. The Church believes that all knowledge comes from a single source and should be understood as a unified whole. This means that the light of faith has *something* to add to all disciplines. However, the integrity of different disciplines should be recognised and the mission of the Church in the world benefits from excellence in all academic and vocational areas of education, each of which has something special and distinctive to contribute to the whole.

One example of this approach is given in the Vatican 2018 letter *Oeconomicae et pecuniariae quaestiones (Considerations for an ethical discernment regarding some aspects of the present economic-financial system)* in which it was stated:

In this regard, it is particularly desirable that institutions such as universities and business schools both foresee and provide, as a fundamental and not merely supplementary element of their curricula of studies, a formational dimension that educates the students to understand economics and finance in the light of a vision of the totality of the human person and avoids a reductionism that sees only some dimensions of the person. An ethics is needed to design such formation (sic). (10)

(See, Booth, P. M. (2020) Ethics in Economics: Lessons and Themes for Further Development from *Oeconomicae et pecuniariae quaestiones*. *Journal of Catholic Social Thought*, 17 (2). ISSN 1548-0712 for a discussion of this document, including its educational aspects applied to business teaching).

The Anglican Church has produced an excellent document on higher education (*Faith in Higher Education – a Church of England Vision*). This goes more deeply into the practical implications of being a Christian university in an English context than any Catholic document that is available, though with a slightly different theological emphasis. Some of the points in that document are worth noting, and below are some quotations from the document:



Higher education is about seeking and celebrating wisdom, which is multifaceted knowledge pursued and used well. This requires the development of character, of personal and institutional virtues such as self-discipline, honesty, humility, respect for evidence and for the understanding of others[...]

Institutions of higher education should therefore be communities which are deeply humane. Humane not only in their concern for all aspects of human wellbeing, but humane in their treatment of each person distinctively involved in the common enterprise. They will recognise that we are not mere 'brains in vats', but embodied souls with physical and spiritual needs[...]

Far from being oppressive, this optimistic theocentrism means that higher education should value contestation within and between disciplines, since there is something worth arguing about. It also means that academics can offer genuine expertise with humble confidence[...]

Embodied beings are only capable of close relationships with a limited number of people. Because the quality of a community will depend on the frequency, length and nature of the interactions which take place within it, there are natural limits to the size and stability of real communities. Higher education institutions should take seriously our natural limits as persons called for a particular time to a particular place. This has wide-ranging implications for administrative organisation, and physical and virtual infrastructure. Units and programmes of study and research, and expectations of staff and students should all contribute towards sustaining community[...]

The above point is especially pertinent when considering University strategy. This is particularly so bearing in mind the trade-offs between size and the potential to generate funds for investment.

Academic freedom is what enables scholars to make a distinctive contribution to collective wisdom. Universities should uphold their historic commitment to academic freedom in this sense.

Key points in this section

- The focus of a Catholic higher education is the human person.
- Education itself should be an act of service and we should help students, in turn, to become of service to others.
- A genuine community has natural limits in terms of its size: our structures and strategy should reflect that.
- The relationship between students and academics is key to authentic education: there should be free association between students and academics.
- The religious mission must be vitally present within the university.
- Because Catholics believe that everything comes from God, they believe that everything, including all knowledge is connected. All subjects have their legitimate domain, but they all cohere, and so inter-disciplinary study is vital.
- Academic freedom is very important: we should never be afraid to disagree, sometimes vigorously.



- Although people of other faiths or none, might not understand these points in the same way, many of their practical implications are still widely accepted.

Section two: How does St. Mary's University articulate its own vision?

This section outlines how the University sees itself in the context of its Catholic mission. It draws on documents that have been agreed at all levels within St. Mary's University after much discussion and consultation.

It is important to note that the objects of the University are:

- To advance education, in such manner as befits a Catholic foundation, by: the provision, development and conduct of a Catholic institution of higher education
- The provision of training and continuing professional development for teachers in both religious and secular schools, with special provision for those intending to teach in Catholic and other Christian schools

The Catholic mission of the University and its relationship to teaching and learning were discussed in Vision 2025. Specifically, it was stated:

[The Mission] derives from the philosophy of Blessed John Henry, Cardinal Newman, the architect of the modern understanding of a university. His idea of a university was built on inter-disciplinary education, virtues and values, with an emphasis on the formation of each individual enriched by insights from the Catholic intellectual tradition. This ethos will continue to be built into our curriculum, our style of teaching and our approach to learning which will emphasise student engagement and participation more than formal lectures.

This paragraph reflects many of the points made in Section One. Our University is a diverse community. At the same time, we have a distinctive approach to education that is widely respected and regarded as important by people who are not Catholics. Following the financial crisis, for example, there was much criticism of the "siloeing" of disciplines and the absence of ethics and values in business education. The same is true in discussions of education in the area of healthcare.

Also, in Vision 2025, there were more specific statements about how we see the development of the student experience:

- We want to create the best possible conditions for our students and staff to develop into independent problem solvers and *ethical* leaders (emphasis added).
- [Students] will demonstrate St Mary's values in their daily lives, generously caring for and contributing to the community, and bringing an ethical approach to all that they do.
- We will deliver this through a distinctive St Mary's approach that develops a broad and balanced education embracing formation of the whole character.



The approach should embody St. Mary's values. It should be implemented with *generosity of spirit* and *respect*, listening to and engaging with the diverse ideas that exist amongst the students and staff, whilst ensuring that the mission of the University is reflected in the curriculum. The approach should encourage *excellence* so that students and teachers, are encouraged to think hard about the academic material that is presented, so developing their intellects and preparing them for further study, employment and participation in wider society. And it should be *inclusive* and so give all students the opportunity to benefit from these aspects of the Catholic intellectual tradition but in a way that does not assume that they are Catholic, Christian or, indeed, believers: the optional cross-curricular modules in the Curriculum Framework are a good example of how this can be done (see Section Three).

The University's Curriculum Framework is related to Vision 2025 at several points and indicates the qualities that we would like to see in our graduates. The Curriculum Framework states:

A central message of Newman's Idea of a University, is that the 'soul' of a University can be measured in the mark it leaves on its students, and that universities can develop students in ways that go beyond the limits of academic ability. In other words, they can influence or 'shape' the character and values of students through inclusive ideals and practices. If, as Newman argued, the soul of a University can be seen in the mark it leaves on its students, it is important that we share, as a community, a common understanding of the 'mark' St Mary's should have on its students – in terms of the 'qualities' we wish our students to acquire and demonstrate after leaving us.

The qualities mentioned in the Framework are: empathy; courage; generosity; curiosity; humility; and inclusivity. These can be linked to the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude. The cardinal virtues play an important role in Catholic thinking whilst being inclusive in that they are accessible by the intellect alone. These virtues and values, whilst being linked to intellectual pursuits, are important for leadership and the development of character more generally. It is therefore appropriate that they are developed in a Catholic university.

Vision 2030 deals with the question more briefly, but it states: "Our aims in Vision 2030 are an expression of our Catholic ethos and, in particular, St. John Henry Newman's idea that higher education should be about developing the whole person and that all knowledge is interconnected." Again, this is a commitment to student-centred learning and a recognition of the coherence of knowledge which, according to Catholic beliefs, comes from one source. Vision 2030 also restates our mission as: "an inclusive Catholic university seeking to develop the whole person and empower our community to have a positive impact on the world". The University, in other words, should be inclusive and serve our students in such a way that they can serve the world.

Whilst the University is inclusive, our Catholic mission provides a point of difference from other universities. As in much of the Catholic education sector, inside and outside the UK, there is no contradiction between being inclusive and being distinctive. The distinctive Catholic view of higher education may mark us as being different from a sector where utilitarian values are often paramount. However, it is an ancient



perspective which is widely respected, including by people of no faith. As Vision 2030 puts it: “Rooted in our Catholic Foundation, with the value of the human person at its heart, our values set us apart, shape our behaviour and inform all our decisions in a university that responds to the demands of today.”

In terms of its practical aspiration, Vision 2030 commits the University to ensure that “each student, whatever their background, can achieve their potential” and that we “make sure that students themselves help shape life at St Mary’s...Ensuring [that] students are partners in all we do” and that: “Students will be encouraged to participate fully in University life.” These resonate with the Catholic Church’s own teaching, as well as the Anglican document on higher education in areas such as ensuring free association between teachers and students and the focus of education being the student.

Key points in this section

- St. Mary’s University has been established: “To advance education, in such manner as befits a Catholic foundation, by: the provision, development and conduct of a Catholic institution of higher education”. This is part of its legal objects which it must fulfil.
- Formation in the virtues should form an important part of the curriculum.
- Student engagement and participation is a key part of our mission: students and staff should walk together in shaping the University and the educational experience.
- We should offer students the opportunity of an inter-disciplinary education.
- We would like St. Mary’s students to become ethical leaders and to care for and contribute to the community. This requires the development of their character and the development of an understanding of the virtues in the context of St. Mary’s values.
- Motivated by its Catholic mission, the University is an inclusive community which brings higher education to a wider range of potential students.

Section three: Current, and proposed future, curriculum and programme developments

There are a number of ways in which the special character and mission of St. Mary’s is already reflected in curriculum and programme provision and also in research. The mission is also reflected in an extensive programme of public events, often working with Catholic charities, think tanks or dioceses as well as with other faith groups. We are increasingly reaching out to the local community and have a productive relationship with Churches Together and the Anglican Church in Teddington. Masters programmes in Catholic School Leadership, Catholic Social Teaching, Theology and Bio-ethics and Medical Law sit alongside programmes that are not so explicitly faith-based but are very much connected to the social mission of the Church – such as Masters programmes in Trafficking, Migration and Organised Crime and in Education, International Development and Social Justice. There are also modules that involve the teaching business ethics in a virtue ethics framework as well as a wide range of partnerships with leading Catholic universities. Recently, the Mater Ecclesiae College has been developed and its early years have proven very successful. In addition, we



have recently developed an apprenticeship in school chaplaincy working with the Southwark Archdiocese and the Diocese of Nottingham. Most recently, we have begun the process of establishing a St. Mary's University Medical School.

This section describes recent curriculum developments which will build on our successes.

3.1 Curriculum Framework

The Curriculum Framework states that *21st Century Societal and Global Challenges* should be an optional module at level 5/6 which can be taken by any student unless professional body requirements prevent it. Following consultation, discussion and a decision by Academic Board, this module has now been replaced by a module called *Responsible Leadership in the 21st Century*. Further details are outlined below.

In 2022/2023, this module is being offered (with variations) at Level 5 and at Level 6.

The aims of the *Leadership* module are:

- To equip students with basic aptitudes for understanding responsible leadership and the tools available for their development into being responsible leaders
- To foster employability with a module focusing on non-specific and broad transferable skills, well-recognised by potential employers
- To offer a flagship module which is emblematic of St Mary's distinctive mission and ethos
- To draw on sources and developments rooted in the Catholic tradition, in a way which will be of relevance to any St Mary's student, inclusive of all backgrounds
- To foster collaboration between SAHPS and each of the three Institutes and tackle academic silos
- To implement the integrative direction of the St Mary's Curriculum Framework

The indicative content is:

- Innovative provision of individualised coaching around each student's strengths and challenges, with 1-2-1s at the start and end of the module
- A thematic spine to provide overall coherence, using approaches including virtue-based leadership, the techniques of Alexandre Havard, and Divine Renovation's 'fruitful leadership' strategies
- Bespoke content on particular themes from participating departments across the University – to be decided in dialogue with those departments. For example, self-discipline and consistency (Football Coaching), public speaking and presentation (Drama), resilience (Education), cultural sensitivity (Humanities), non-verbal communication (Psychology), mindfulness, ethics and virtuous behaviour (Theology), decision-making (Business), ethics (Business and politics)

This module can be related directly to the graduate qualities (empathy, courage, etc) and attributes (communication, teamwork etc) outlined in the Curriculum Framework. It will be based within a virtue ethics framework mapped onto the virtues that have been identified as being relevant to the graduate qualities and attributes.



The curriculum framework module *An Inter-disciplinary Encounter with the Sacred* (IES) is also available at level five and level six. This module examines a number of disciplines and their relationship with each other and with an appreciation of the sacred.

Following relatively low number on these modules in their first two years, work is being undertaken to ensure that they are validated on all appropriate programmes and marketed more effectively.

3.2 Expanding the reach of our programmes

The University has a number of unique programmes that are particularly mission-focused. Examples include the MA in Catholic Social Teaching, MA in Catholic School Leadership and the MA in Bio-ethics and Medical Law. There are other examples too which express the social aspects of the mission of a Catholic university and others that are more overtly theological. The MA in Social Justice and Public Service; the MA in Human Trafficking, Migration and Organised Crime; the MA in Charity Management; and the MA in Education, Social Justice and International Development fall into the former category. Many of these are more-or-less unique internationally – certainly in the English-speaking world. We should ensure that they are available globally to the extent that is possible.

A number of these programmes (MA in Catholic Social Teaching, MA in Catholic School Leadership and MA in Education (Religious Education)) can be taken by distance learning already. The MA in Catholic Social Teaching was brought into mixed-mode (the phrase I will use for when zoom students and face-to-face students are brought together) following a discussion of an earlier version of this paper.

Other programmes in this area could be a more effective service to the Church and the world if they were available by video conferencing to a national and international audience (even if students had to come to a campus for a few days each year). If these programmes were available by video conferencing, it might then be possible to collaborate with other Catholic universities who could buy into and validate our modules whilst “topping and tailing” with their own bespoke content to produce their own Masters programme. Some programmes could be a more effective service if they were taught in central London.

A great deal of progress has been made in the last year to make these programmes available to a wider range of students.

Unless the University develops and implements a uniform policy on distance learning and mix-mode teaching, there are always going to be differences of approach. However, it is important that practice (programme design), process (for example, validation) and marketing are brought together in relation to any initiative designed to bring these programmes to a wider audience and that student feedback is obtained on the success of different approaches. Deans should work with Subject Leads and Course Leads and the Provost work with Global Engagement to ensure that the programmes mentioned in this sub-section are designed so as to be available to the widest possible audience (whilst ensuring quality is maintained) and that they are effectively marketed. The key features of these programmes are that they are unique,



niche and that the potential student base is international. This way, it is much more likely that smaller programmes will survive.

3.3 Edinburgh Campus

The University centre in Edinburgh opened in September 2021 with nine students on the MA in Applied Catholic Theology. Two students dropped out. There has been a slight increase in the number of students for 2022. However, it has not been possible to launch the education programmes successfully. We do have a very good relationship with the Archdiocese of St. Andrews and Edinburgh and are examining the possibility of offering more programmes (for example, Diaconate training), though not necessarily through the Gillis Centre. In the absence of a permanent human presence in Edinburgh, it is going to be difficult to grow the student numbers rapidly.

We continue to look for opportunities to partner with universities overseas that might be interested in developing business or liberal arts programmes at a Scottish base. This is the most obvious way to make the Gillis Centre viable. These discussions continue but it is difficult to predict how they will work out.

3.4 Service learning

The Porticus-sponsored international consortium of Catholic universities which works to embed service-learning more deeply in the curriculum (Uniservitate), of which the University was a member, has now come to an end. Around five members of staff have undertaken the training and, as part of the arrangement, the University has received around €16,000 to market service-learning programmes.

Service learning involves students undertaking some form of voluntary or community service activity and relating this to a programme of study, assessment and learning outcomes. The promotion of service-learning could become a really important marketing tool for St. Mary's, both inside and outside the Catholic community. It is the sort of activity that should be done within a Catholic university, but it is also the sort of activity that has wide appeal to all people of goodwill and especially young people. Such activity, and the marketing of it, could make the public promotion of our mission more effective as well as being attractive to potential students. There are no universities in the UK that currently promote service learning in a coherent and consistent fashion. This is an opportunity for St. Mary's.

We already undertake some service learning (detailed in our application to Uniservitate). At the time of the application, the then Faculty of Sports, Health and Applied Sciences led the way. However, there were also pockets of service learning in other programmes (often where students took a volunteering placement in a work-placement module but could not get paid work). The curriculum framework module on leadership gives all students the opportunity to undertake a small service-learning component (a three-day volunteering placement in an organisation with the assessment being based on the placement). Many of the Centre for Workplace Learning modules provide service learning opportunities.

In addition, the MA in Social Justice and Public Service has now been launched. This has a substantial service learning component: the main service learning module



involves 150 hours of service for a UK charity. This service learning module has been adopted on the MA in Education, International Development and Social Justice and will be adopted on the MA in Catholic Social Teaching; the MA Theology; and the MA Christian Spirituality. The module should also be adopted on the MA in Bioethics and Medical Law during its revalidation. Students on many of these programmes will already be undertaking community service and a service learning module will be more suitable for them than a traditional research dissertation.

When the adoption of this service learning module (as an option available instead of the dissertation) was put to the external examiners of the above course, the following comments came back:

I have reviewed the Service Learning Module, and am very impressed by this development to your programme. The module is well conceived, purposefully constructed and should provide an excellent experience for students. I am happy to approve the module and wish you every success in rolling it out.

And:

This looks great - only comment would be around ensure any safeguarding/ethical concerns in robust policy that's clear for students to follow and supervisors to ensure is in place that might be specific to kind of charitable/volunteering work that might involve vulnerable people in relation to CST [Catholic social teaching]? Sounds a wonderful addition!

SAHPS Faculty continue to be very interested in the development of service learning and, as noted above, it is integrated into many of their programmes already.

The University should develop service learning more coherently and consistently and ensure that it forms a key part of its academic strategy and, hence, its marketing messages. Given that service learning is already a key aspect of many of the Centre for Workplace Learning modules, much of the work should really involve developing a coherent strategy that encapsulates the very good work that is already ongoing. This will help us develop service learning and ensure that it is marketed effectively.

Though the detailed development of a Medical School curriculum is still some way off, service learning can form an important aspect of medical training in St. Mary's University Medical School.

There are also extensive, and growing, opportunities for volunteering outside the curriculum. Crucial to promoting St. Mary's as a Catholic university will be the marketing of service learning and volunteering as being integral to our mission. It is proposed that the next prospectus will contain a section on "volunteering and serving the community" (or similar title) that will showcase some of the service learning and volunteering opportunities that exist.

3.5 The promotion of ethics in the curriculum

There are various subject areas where we try to leverage our strength in ethics and leadership within taught programmes. This has been well embedded in education and theology for some time. A virtue ethics approach to character and leadership is also followed in one of the Curriculum Framework modules (see above). In addition, in



business and communications and allied health programmes there have been interesting developments. In business, modules have been amended to put greater emphasis on virtue ethics in business (especially in, but not limited to, postgraduate programmes). Business ethics is also taught within the MA in Catholic Social Teaching and the work of the Business Ethics research cluster is especially helpful in developing this area of work.

Within the School of Business, consideration could be given to ensuring that a core character and ethics component is at the centre of the curriculum in a broader range of subjects. This is a subject area where the kind of approach that is taken at St. Mary's (emphasising virtue ethics) is admired widely within business and it also prepares students well for employment. Ensuring that this happened would be a significant step forward in the development of our business school, but it could also lead, organically, to the development of a core curriculum across the University more widely. Consideration could be given to the development of a named degree that includes business ethics in the title at levels six and/or seven.

The teaching of ethics in healthcare is more complex because of the relationship between programme requirements and professional bodies. We do, however, have an existing strength in bioethics, through the MA in Bio-ethics and Medical Law, and the Centre for the Art of Dying Well is clearly relevant to the work being undertaken in healthcare. The University also works with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to put together a series of events each year on medical ethics for health practitioners. The Faculty of Sport, Allied Health and Performance Science is working in partnership with the Centre for the Art of Dying Well to develop a St Mary's "Living Well Service", aimed at serving the needs of the local community and partner charities. With an ageing society, smaller families, more dispersed families, and more people living with co-morbidities, living well means not just good physical and mental health, but also creating opportunities to connect with others and build community. The intention is that the service would be inter-generational - St Mary's Allied Health students would principally be working with older people.

It will also be important to plan to incorporate ethics into the development of teaching and practice within the school as well as draw on expertise in centres such as the Art of Dying Well. General Medical Council (GMC) requirements are such that techniques will have to be taught which a Catholic, in good conscience, could neither practice nor encourage others to practice. A Catholic university could not encourage their practice either. However, the teaching of those topics is still important, and will be required by the GMC, if students are to be ready for practice, research and involvement in public life.

Within the medical school, ethically sensitive subjects will be taught in such a way that the teaching does not conflict with the mission and ethos of the University. As such, the teaching of medical ethics, in which the University already has expertise, will be a key part of the curriculum in general and the teaching of these areas in particular. St Mary's will aspire to educate discerning medical practitioners and not simply technicians. The School will teach medical ethics in such a way that academic freedom and freedom of speech will not just be preserved but explicitly promoted. We will



encourage students to take ethical issues very seriously as a subject of intellectual inquiry both for its own sake and because of their importance in medical practice.

We understand that the GMC would be supportive of an increased focus on bio-ethics and philosophical teaching. Students will have to understand the law and understand the rights of conscientious objection just as students at any other medical school would. As a Catholic organisation, as in other faith-based institutions where medicine is taught, students will experience an ethically principled, values-based, caring message, which would be nurtured as part of the curriculum. Volunteering, participation in subjects outside the curriculum, encouraging leadership and a more ethical-based programme would be seen as strengths.

The above description of programmes and initiatives, in 3.1 to 3.5, is not exhaustive, and it is continually expanding and evolving. It probably does not do justice to short courses, public engagement and, as noted, explicitly excludes research. However, it gives a flavour how the University has developed to be of service to the Church and the world and could develop in the future.

3.6 Communicating our approach to education to students

We should try to communicate our mission, vision and values to students and potential students effectively. London is an area in which there is a disproportionately high number of practising Catholics, Christians and people of other faiths – including young people. It is important to find a way to market the University in this environment whilst also ensuring that the University is attractive to those who have no particular interest in our mission but appreciate the special student-centred atmosphere that is cultivated by all academic staff. This paper is concerned, more particularly, with communicating our mission to current students.

St. Mary's should communicate its mission in a way that would not confuse students (many of whom may not even realise that St. Mary's is a Catholic university). At the same time, we should explain our special charism to students. It is proposed that an additional section should be added to moodle pages in an appropriate place (probably programme landing pages) called "St. Mary's Mission and Values". I suggest that Version One is the default version, but some programmes might wish to use Version Two.

Version One

St. Mary's University was established in the mid-nineteenth century to train teachers to teach immigrant children who were amongst the country's poorest people. Like many institutions established at that time, we have matured into a university, but our values have not changed.

Our vision of education derives from the philosophy of St. John Henry Newman, whose work gave rise to the modern understanding of a university. His idea of a university was built on inter-disciplinary education, virtues and values, with an emphasis on the formation of each individual enriched by insights from the Catholic intellectual tradition.

This approach is accepted widely by people of all faiths and none. In particular, after the financial crisis, the problems arising from teaching different academic subjects in



“silos” became increasingly recognised. There have also been crises in other areas of society, such as drug taking in sport and negligence within hospitals, which have called into question an approach to education which detaches technical knowledge from ethics. Newman’s approach to university education will be built into your curriculum, our style of teaching and our approach to learning which will emphasise student engagement and participation. You will have the opportunity to take modules from our “St. Mary’s Mission and Values Portfolio” which, in different ways address character and leadership, ethics, service to the community and the links between different subjects.

Through your programme, we want to create the best possible conditions for our students and staff to develop into independent problem solvers and ethical leaders.

We hope that you will demonstrate St Mary’s values in your daily lives, generously caring for and contributing to the community, and bringing an ethical approach to all that you do. We will help you do that through a distinctive St Mary’s approach to education that develops a broad and balanced education embracing formation of the whole person.

Our approach to your programme will embody St. Mary’s values. True to our founding purpose, it will be inclusive. We expect all students and staff to act with generosity of spirit, listening to and engaging with the diverse ideas that exist amongst the students and staff, whilst ensuring that the mission of the University is central to the curriculum. We will promote excellence - students and academics will be encouraged to think hard about the academic material that is presented, so developing your intellects and preparing you for further study, employment and participation in wider society. And you should act with respect towards all your colleagues, whether other students or staff – our staff will do the same.

A central message of Newman’s Idea of a University is that the ‘soul’ of a university can be measured in the mark it leaves on its students, and that universities can develop students in ways that go beyond the development of their academic potential. In other words, universities can work with students to help them develop their character and values. This is what we hope to do in the time you spend with us. In addition, following the words of Pope Francis when he opened the “Global Compact on Education” in 2020, we will strive to ensure that the student is placed at the centre of all we do and to educate you to be of service to others. We recognise that most of the staff and students at St. Mary’s are not Catholic. However, Pope Francis’s statement was intended for everybody and we hope it will influence your choices after you leave the university.

We hope that, when you graduate, you will have a rewarding career that allows you to fulfil your ambitions and serve society. We also hope that you will still feel part of our university community as an alumnus and still benefit from and contribute to our special mission.

Version two (additional paragraph is added before the paragraph which begins “A central message...”)



According to Catholic Church teaching on Catholic universities, while each discipline is taught systematically and according to its own methods, interdisciplinary studies, assisted by a careful and thorough study of philosophy and theology, enable students to acquire an organic vision of reality and to develop a continuing desire for intellectual progress. In addition, a Catholic University is called in a particular way to ensure that its Christian inspiration enables it to include the moral, spiritual and religious dimension in its research, and to evaluate the attainments of science and technology in the perspective of the totality of the human person. This approach to our research will also permeate our teaching.

End of statements

It should be noted that the purpose of this statement is for the University to explain its philosophy to students as is already explained in various strategy documents. Version one, in particular, does not pre-suppose any particular religious beliefs on the part of the student or the academics associated with the delivery of the programme, nor does it impinge on academic freedom.

There will also be a portfolio of “St. Mary’s Mission and Values” modules created. Students will not have the opportunity to study all these modules and there may be a few students who are not able to study any. However, the vast majority of undergraduate students will have the opportunity to study modules that reflect St. Mary’s mission as a Catholic university and/or the University’s values. These modules can be then by marketed more effectively as a group, including within the prospectus.

Key points in this section

- We celebrate a wide range of activity inspired by our mission which is not explicitly discussed in this paper, but which is crucial to the history and recent development of St. Mary’s University.
- We will work to ensure that all programmes that should have the Curriculum Framework modules validated do have them validated.
- We will create a portfolio (from existing modules) a group of “St. Mary’s Mission and Values Modules”.
- We will promote service learning more strategically within the University and outside as well as extra-curricular volunteering opportunities.
- We should work to promote ethics and character more effectively throughout the curriculum building on the examples in the Business School.
- Medical ethics, living and dying well and other similar initiatives should become more embedded in programmes with the University. This will prove especially important in the medical school which can draw on existing resources within the University.
- A Mission and Values statements for all programme Moodle pages should be created for implementation.

