Why does teaching matter?

- We cannot take for granted the UK's world leadership in providing students with an exceptional student experience

- The student experience needs to be constantly re-invented if it is to remain outstanding

- There is an increasing focus on dispensing university education efficiently and a diminishing emphasis on questioning whether the system is doing the right thing by students (and other users of higher education)

- Effective university teaching has little to do with consumer satisfaction. It is about getting students to engage with abstract ideas in a way that will enable them to link theory and practice, and stimulating their motivation for lifelong learning. Challenging students to think is at the core of teaching in higher education

- There are simple tests to assess whether a department or a programme offers an excellent student experience

- Threats to maintaining excellence include unnecessary administrative processes, separation of teaching from academic work, poorly prepared students, and an emphasis on the signs of quality rather than the substance

- Demanding a lot of students is necessary for producing graduates who are resilient and resourceful

- Extending students to their limits requires (1) recognition that effective undergraduate teaching requires a more robust link between knowledge production, scholarship and the student experience; (2) stronger emphasis on the alliance between subject content, academic staff and students; (3) more vigorous leadership at national level; and (4) reaffirmation of academic identity by applying the same principles to improving teaching as we should apply to ensuring an excellent student experience