

University of Gloucestershire

People Make The Difference

People and Culture Strategy 2017 – 2022

1. Why do we need a people and culture strategy?

The University's Mission is "founded on values, centred on students, focussed on learning" and the Strategic Plan sets out how the mission will be delivered over the next five years. Key to successful delivery are our people and they will make the difference to how much is achieved and how well that is done.

The Strategic Plan for 2017- 22 states: "The University is a people-based organisation. Achievement of all our goals depends on the skills, professionalism and engagement of our staff. The highest priority amongst our enablers is therefore to recruit, retain and motivate excellent staff, and to create a working environment in which all staff can achieve their full potential and be part of the transformational purpose of the University."

"During the period of this strategic plan, we intend to focus on building a culture of empowerment, engagement and accountability with more space for staff to exercise professional judgement and initiative, within a framework of agreed goals."

The People and Culture Strategy for 2017 – 22 is designed to address the fundamental organisational and people requirements that will enable the university to deliver the strategic goals:

- Providing a breadth and richness of experience that enables all our students to reach their full potential
- Providing teaching and support for learning of the highest quality
- Undertaking excellent research and innovative professional practice which enrich students' learning and create impact and benefit for others
- Building partnerships that create opportunity, innovation and mutual benefit for the communities we serve

We want every person to play a full part in delivering these goals, achieve their potential and to be the best that they can be.

2. Progress to date

The University has had a People and Culture Strategy since 2012 and has surveyed staff every two years (in 2013 and 2015 and 2017) to obtain feedback and to track progress.

We know that we are fortunate in having many hardworking, dedicated and talented staff who place our students at the heart of everything they do. These staff are committed to providing excellent teaching and learning experiences, research and scholarship, and high quality professional services.

Feedback from the 2017 staff survey shows improvement in staff views of working at the university: overall satisfaction is now at 79%; 89% say that the university is a good place to work, and 87% feeling proud to work here.

This new people and culture strategy builds from this position and recognises the achievements of the past years in terms of improved DHLE results and NSS scores as well as improvements in rankings. However changes in the sector mean that to be successful we need to keep on improving to thrive in an increasingly competitive environment, and be ready to face any new challenges ahead.

The first people and culture strategy focused on leadership and management development through coaching, with 360 feedback to inform priorities for improvement. Structural change was implemented to strengthen leadership of subject communities and development opportunities put in place to support the changes. The individual staff review and development process (SRD) was improved and has been updated again based on staff feedback. Staff training and development has been delivered with high quality sessions offered to meet needs identified in staff feedback.

Our approach to equality and diversity has been strengthened and our monitoring data is starting to show improved outcomes. The staff survey results have shown year on year improvements in levels of staff engagement and improvement in staff views on many aspects of the working environment which provides assurance that the actions put in place since 2012 have brought benefits to staff and the working environment, and made a contribution to the performance of the university.

There is still more to do and the competitive pressures within the sector mean that we cannot stand still. We need to identify the factors that will enable the university to maintain high performance and create the conditions for a successful future. These are addressed in section five of this document.

3. Towards 2022 - the importance of Values and Culture

Since the phrase “culture eats strategy for breakfast” gained common use (attributed to Peter Drucker and based on the work of Edgar Schein, both eminent academics) many articles have been written in support of the concept. It doesn’t suggest that strategy is not important but research shows that a healthy organisational culture is essential for the successful implementation of strategy. This People and Culture Strategy therefore puts more emphasis on the factors that will deliver a healthy culture and working environment as they are critical to successful outcomes.

Development of the new People and Culture strategy 2017- 22 started in August 2016 as part of the wider consultation process for generating content for the University Strategic Plan. In order to understand the current position, staff were consulted about their lived experience of working at the University, their views of the culture and what could make the University a great place to work.

Staff told us they want:

- greater involvement
- to feel valued for their contribution
- to experience greater empowerment, receive more encouragement and support from managers
- higher levels of trust
- be inspired by senior colleagues and the university leadership
- have more time to participate in training and development,
- better balanced workloads
- more interaction and collaboration between department and schools
- better communication
- inappropriate behaviour being tackled

Managers were also consulted about what is needed to create a high performance culture and successfully deliver our strategic aims. The joint feedback was used to create a people and culture proposition which acknowledged the importance of people in delivering an excellent student experience. The proposition was consulted on and refined and now forms part of the content of this strategy document. The process has been highly engaging and inclusive and at every stage people have been encouraged to contribute through workshops, focus groups and on line activity.

We have a set of values which should underpin our culture and shape our behaviours:

- Nurture
- Creativity
- Sustainability
- Service
- Respect
- Trust

For these values to be recognisable in everyday life at work, they need to be translated into easily understood behaviours and actions. This people and culture strategy has put more focus on the way we behave and act towards each other and in particular we will focus on those behaviours that :

- support our students to realise their full potential
- value human relationships within our community
- support taking personal responsibility for making a full contribution to the success of the University through the application of our skills and effort
- help other staff to achieve their full potential and give of their best
- enable collaborative working on the basis of trust and openness
- empower others to apply their professional expertise and judgement in pursuit of shared goals
- ensure that we learn from our mistakes
- challenge ourselves to improve, underpinned by feedback to inform our improvement
- encourage engagement in learning and development to increase our ability to contribute to excellent outcomes in our respective subject or professional areas
- ensure we treat each other fairly and with respect, valuing diversity and respecting difference

Healthy organisations are those that pay attention to culture and understand how organisational health contributes to organisational success. Leadership is one of the critical success factors in creating a healthy culture based on trust, clarity and effective communication.

Leaders and managers need to accept a particular responsibility for :

- Empowering, holding to account, developing, supporting and coaching their staff
- Developing trust, inspiring people and creating the environment in which people can succeed

In return we expect every individual regardless of role, status or job title to accept personal responsibility to contribute positively to achieving the goals of the university, to live the values, and to give of their best.

4. The drivers for action

This section is about the environment in which the university is operating and the challenges we are facing, both internal and external. These, along with embedding the behaviours described above, create the drivers for action over the coming five year period.

The sector continues to be highly competitive and subject to external factors such as Brexit, developing government policy and demographics. Due to the reduction in numbers of school leavers over the next three years, student recruitment is going to become more challenging, before an expected upturn in the number of eighteen year olds from 2021. This highlights the importance of continuing to build our reputation for the quality of our student experience, and improving our record of employment on leaving university, both of which will be essential to securing our share of the market.

We have set ourselves ambitious goals in the new Strategic Plan which describe expectations of a confident, growing, high performing university delivering transformational student experiences. We have had a number of successful years, with healthy increases in student numbers and positive recognition in the National Student Survey. The 2017 NSS results however, while maintaining parity with the sector average, did not deliver progress towards our improvement target. We recognise that we have work to do to reach the target set for our overall satisfaction rate and to improve consistency across all courses.

The university's expectation is that all students will experience excellent teaching and learning and have a fulfilling experience at the University that prepares them to go into the world as good citizens and to succeed in their lives and chosen careers. We expect staff to demonstrate the behaviours we now associate with the Gloucestershire graduate: engaged; enquiring; empowered; empathetic; and ethical.

This means working with Academic Subject Leaders, Course Leaders, Module Tutors and others to develop a deep understanding and advanced skills in the areas that will lead to continuous enhancement of student learning opportunities and the student experience. Personal Tutors also have a key role to play and will be supported to fulfil this role. The academic development programme will be reviewed to include reflective practice, peer review and coaching as core elements for all academic staff.

The university already has a strong understanding and commitment amongst our staff to putting our students at the heart of everything we do. We need to build even further on this in the next five years with increasing importance placed on the quality of the individual relationships and personal experiences that students have with staff and with each other. Improving communications will be important, particularly the importance of understanding

and managing student expectations and the positive impact of good communication on maintaining effective relationships.

Academic staff play a pivotal role in developing partnerships with students in pursuit of our academic endeavour, encouraging students to actively engage in shaping their own learning. Professional services staff also have a critical role to play, including in the direct delivery and support of the learning experience, in ensuring that the administration of the student experience is of the highest quality, and in providing the physical and administrative infrastructure that supports student life. So all staff have a positive contribution to make regardless of the extent to which they have contact with students, and regardless of status or the type of job they do.

Working together to build and sustain vibrant communities across the university will depend on the ability to respect different views and harness the talents of all. Working in this way will require trust, respect and a positive approach to inclusion. These qualities will be equally important in building our approach to internationalisation where an appreciation of different cultures and an ability to embrace different ideas and ways of working will be needed.

A positive staff experience is essential to delivering an excellent student experience. The 2017 staff survey has shown that the majority of staff (79%) are satisfied working here and 89% believe the university is a good place to work. To sustain and improve this further, particularly in a demanding environment, means mirroring for staff the commitments made to students in the University Strategy to: support wellbeing; build a strong sense of shared purpose and community; work collaboratively; and develop skills for future careers. All of these commitments are equally important for our staff and if delivered will enable all the people working at the University to contribute fully to the transformational student experience.

To ensure that we are building a confident, high performing organisation, we need to honestly appraise our performance and be willing to improve where we are able. This requires maturity and a genuine desire to learn and grow as individuals and as a community, underpinned by a willingness to give and receive constructive feedback. Feedback from the 2017 staff survey suggests that this is an area to improve on. Another area to improve is effectively managing under performance. Staff and managers recognise the importance of this and further development and support will be provided to ensure that issues are picked up at an early stage and managed well.

There are a number of workforce and employment trends that it will be important to be cognisant of over the next five years. We can't ignore the rising costs of employment, not least that pension costs continue to increase and are causing concerns for many employers, not just in the HE sector. Other aspects of planning our workforce include coping with fluctuating demands and finances due to the demographic dip and developing creative approaches and solutions to how we plan our workforce to ensure long term stability and affordability.

With employment costs rising, we need to ensure we are supporting our staff to be as productive as possible. A recent article in the Harvard Business Review (Eric Garton "The Case for Investing More in People" September 2017) states that the key drivers to improving productivity relate to time, talent and energy of the people employed. Energised employees are twice as productive as satisfied employees (and three times more productive than dissatisfied employees).

It has been acknowledged for a number of years that a healthy and happy workforce is more productive. The Engage for Success movement (<http://engageforsuccess.org/engaging-for-success>) has demonstrated the clear link between an engaged workforce and productivity and successful business outcomes. Their business case for staff engagement quotes the benefits of higher levels of engagement including:

- 71% of companies with above average employee engagement performed above their sector average
- 12% higher customer satisfaction and higher rates of customer loyalty
- Lower staff absence
- Higher levels of creativity
- 18% higher productivity
- More likely to return above average profit or surplus
- 12% higher growth in sales

So we should understand the principles of successful staff engagement and learn from published case studies to improve our levels of staff engagement. The benefits listed above could translate into the University context as improvements in the National Student Survey (NSS) and Annual Course Evaluation (ACE) results, student recruitment, less lost time due to absence and increased productivity, all ultimately contributing to our financial health and stability.

The other aspect of improving productivity relates to bureaucracy, too many meetings and inefficient use of email. This again was noted in the 2017 staff survey feedback and will form a work stream to identify improvements in the way we work.

We can also look for ways to improve our financial health through building partnerships which create opportunity, innovation and mutual benefit. HR will work with colleagues in University in Business and Academic Development to support capacity building in this area which could include identifying regional needs, developing flexible learning offers and engaging in consultancy work, joint research and funded projects.

Health and wellbeing are also now high on most organisation's agendas. A significant proportion of our workforce (24%) report in the 2017 staff survey that they feel unduly stressed always or frequently. Stress is linked to unhealthy behaviours such as overeating and lack of exercise and it is well evidenced that stress can impact negatively on productivity. Good employers are increasingly helping their staff address both physical health issues and supporting them with positive mental wellbeing. Public Health England has recently updated its Workplace Wellbeing Charter and is promoting good practice guidance to employers to improve health and wellbeing at work. The University has already committed to working towards achievement of the Charter standards and is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of staff. This work also contributes to our sustainability strategy in supporting a sustainable working environment and practices.

Studies show that factors such as appreciation for an individual's work, work-life balance and good working relationships account for the top three things that attract people to a role, while salary is down in 8th place (Boston Consulting Group 2014). Around a half of the UK workforce is likely to leave their employer in the next few years because of the poor relationship they have with their line manager. The importance of continually developing the skills to manage people well is paramount but it is also important to make sure that managers are given sufficient time to devote to the role. The 2017 staff survey has highlighted managers failure to deal with poor performance as one of the top priorities that staff listed for improvement. This will be addressed in a new management skills

development programme to provide tools and build skill and confidence to deal with these issues effectively.

We want to be known as a good employer and to be able to attract excellent candidates from local and wider professional markets. To do this we need to better explain our ambitions and our values and employment offer, to ensure we are able to attract the most talented people available. We need to understand our current workforce better and plan for the future. In doing this we must address under representation of women in senior positions and of BME staff in academic and professional services roles, especially at senior levels.

To be a confident, high performing organisation we need visible, inspiring leaders who engage and empower staff. It is important that we create a working environment where we remove barriers to working productively and that we build a positive working environment that enables all staff to give of their best.

We expect a return on investment of addressing all the points noted in this section to be a committed, loyal, skilled workforce who take responsibility for their actions and who contribute fully to the successful achievement of the University's strategic goals.

5. Delivering the people and culture strategy

Our vision:

People make the difference: the success of the university relies on the skills, professionalism and engagement of all our people. We will recruit, retain and motivate excellent staff and create a working environment in which all staff can achieve their full potential and contribute fully to the success of the university.

The building blocks of delivery are:

5.1 Planning, attracting and selecting

Strategic aim: to plan for the workforce needed to deliver our strategic goals within available budget. Identify and secure the numbers of people, types of skills and behaviours that will deliver successful outcomes. Use a range of attraction methods and selection tools to help us to identify and acquire the talented people we need.

Key features:

- A clear understanding of our workforce costs and analysis of existing capacity and skills and identify our future requirements
- The use of people data to better understand workloads, work allocation and effective utilisation of people
- Effective attraction strategy in place including marketing the university as a good employer
- A range of selection tools aligned to the values, behaviours and academic strategy
- A diverse workforce embracing all sections of society and reflecting the student body

5.2 Developing and growing

Strategic aim: To identify and put in place a programme of development to strengthen the core capability of the university to deliver excellent learning opportunities, research, business development and professional services resulting in a transformational student experience.

Key features:

- Development for Subject and Course Leaders, Module Tutors and others that is focussed on enhancing the student experience through high quality course content and the wider teaching and learning experience
- Career Frameworks, starting with one for Academic staff, with relevant learning and development opportunities in place to support progression through the pathways. Professional Services staff development, particularly in support of teaching and learning will also be addressed, followed by administrative and other professional services staff progression.
- A Staff Review and Development (SRD) process that is valued by staff and managers and focusses on providing stimulating work, development for effective performance in role, and for career progression, and the importance of core behaviours and giving and receiving feedback
- Reflective practice, peer review and coaching underpin continuous improvement
- All staff have good digital skills

5.3 Motivating and inspiring

Strategic aim: To develop our leaders and managers to motivate, inspire, and deliver high performance. We will adopt an engaging style of leadership and empower and support our staff to work to the best of their ability.

Key features:

- An ongoing programme of leadership and management development for all levels of management to engage and inspire staff
- Senior managers who communicate effectively and build clear lines of sight between the university's strategy and goals and the contribution of teams and individuals and put in place the conditions for successful delivery of those goals
- Middle managers developed to empower, develop, support and coach their staff and enable high performance
- Staff feedback is regularly sought and acted on
- Staff who have opportunities to engage and contribute ideas and who are committed to the success of the university

5.4 Positive culture and inclusive environment

Strategic aim: A confident, positive culture typified by ambition and "can-do" behaviours and where we talk straight about risks and focus on solutions. People will take personal responsibility and are empowered to act. Our workplace will be progressive and healthy and people treat each other with dignity and respect and value difference. This will enable people to work together collaboratively and constructively and feel valued members of the university.

Key features:

- A clear understanding of the culture we want based on being confident and positive and translated into day to day behaviours that can be recognised and rewarded
- A set of core behaviours, including personal responsibility, which are embedded in staff selection, performance and development processes and on which feedback is regularly sought and acted on
- Increased awareness of equality, diversity and valuing difference and active promotion of understanding of different cultures, backgrounds and thinking to improve relationships, increase creativity and raise levels of inclusion
- Demonstrate that we care about staff health and wellbeing by working towards achieving the highest level of achievement under the Public Health England Workplace Wellbeing Charter
- Good connectivity and active encouragement of collaborative working across all sites and functions

5.5 Effective organisation

Strategic aim: professional services are well aligned to the strategic aims of the University and we have streamlined systems and processes that enable work to be done effectively and efficiently. We will introduce change well with minimum disruption and with the involvement of staff affected.

Key features:

- Effective communications mechanisms in place to support upward feedback as well as dissemination of information, and provide opportunities for discussion and engagement
- Effective change management processes that address staff impacts and enable staff involvement
- Simple, streamlined systems and processes that enable people to do their jobs

6. The Action Plan – how we will deliver

GOAL	ACTION AREAS	MEASURES
<p>Planning, attracting and selecting</p> <p>Strategic aim: to plan for the workforce needed to deliver our strategic goals within available budget. Identify and acquire the numbers of people, skills and behaviours that will deliver successful outcomes. Use a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With Finance colleagues, model our workforce costs and plan for the expected rises in pensions and other costs over the five year period • Improve the availability and use of people data to better understand our existing workforce including the use of WAM data to understand workloads and effective utilisation of people. • Develop new approaches to staff attraction including the use of social media • Improve selection tools and consistency of application to ensure we access the best available talent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target met for payroll costs • 90% of vacancies filled within target time • Diverse pools of appropriately qualified candidates for each vacancy, particularly senior roles

<p>range of attraction methods and selection tools to help us to identify and secure the talented people we need</p>	<p>to fill our vacancies and embed a set of core behaviours to recruit people who are aligned to our values and goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address under representation of women in senior roles and selection of BME applicants for roles at all levels through a diversity action plan 	
<p>Developing and Growing</p> <p>Strategic aim: To identify and put in place a programme of development to strengthen the core capability of the university to deliver excellent learning opportunities, research, business development and professional services, resulting in a transformational student experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With ADU, deliver development for Course and Subject Leaders, Module Tutors and others that is focussed on enhancing the student experience and learning opportunities • With ADU, provide development and support for Personal Tutors • With ADU, develop a new Academic Career Pathways and ensure relevant learning and development opportunities are in place to support progression through the pathways. Follow this with other career pathways for technical and professional services staff as needed. • Improve the SRD process so that staff find it useful to improving performance and leaves them feeling valued. • With colleagues from Library, Technology and Information Services improve digital skills of all staff • Develop coaching skills to enhance performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic leadership development programme judged by NSS outcomes and student feedback • SRD feedback staff survey Q4-4 relating to improving performance improves from 44% to at least 65% and Q4-7 relating to staff feeling valued improves from 69% to at least 80%
<p>Motivating and Inspiring</p> <p>Strategic aim: To develop our leaders and managers to motivate, inspire, and deliver high performance. We will adopt an engaging style of leadership and support and empower our staff to work to the best of their ability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a programme of leadership development to engage and inspire staff, addressing staff feedback regarding listening and acting on feedback. This will cover Senior Managers and ASL and ACLs, as well as managers in Professional Services areas. • Provide skills development to underpin consistent implementation of a new people management model, in particular addressing staff feedback about the handling of poor performance and deployment of resources to priority work, ensuring fair and balanced workloads • Build an understanding of engagement tools and techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff survey question relating to effectiveness of communication between senior management and staff Q12-12 improves from 53% to over 70% • Staff survey feedback : my immediate manager deals effectively with poor performance Q8-9 improves to at least 75%

	and behavioural skills to improve staff involvement and engagement	
<p>Positive culture and inclusive work environment</p> <p>Strategic aim: A confident, positive culture typified by ambition and “can-do” behaviours and where we talk straight about risks and focus on solutions. People will take personal responsibility and are empowered to act. Our workplace will be progressive and healthy and people treat each other with dignity and respect and value difference. This will enable people to work together collaboratively and constructively and feel valued members of the university</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a wide understanding of the culture we want through workshops and discussions, underpinned by our values and translated into behaviours • Agree and promote a small number of core behaviours that apply to every member of staff to include personal responsibility • Progress achievement of the highest level of recognition under the “Wellbeing at Work” charter • Provide training and other support to improve staff wellbeing and resilience • Increase awareness of equality, diversity and valuing difference and actively promote understanding of different cultures, backgrounds and thinking to improve relationships and raise levels of inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We achieve the highest level of achievement under the Workplace Wellbeing Charter • Our diversity statistics show we are tracking as a minimum local and HE sector norms for women in senior roles and BME staff at all levels • Sickness absence levels maintained at 5 lost days per person per year or less, in particular those attributed to stress and anxiety do not exceed 20%
<p>Effective Organisation</p> <p>Strategic aim: professional services are well aligned to the strategic aims of the University and we have streamlined systems and processes that enable work to be done effectively and efficiently. We will introduce change well with minimum disruption and with the involvement of staff affected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With CMSR, review communications mechanisms to support upward feedback as well as dissemination of information, and provide opportunities for discussion and engagement. Identify what we already do well and communicate widely. • Make more use of School / Department meetings and briefings and informal discussions in informal settings. • Review change management processes and ensure effective stakeholder engagement and communications plans and processes are in place and implemented • Review with the Strategic Projects and Planning Team the framework for managing and evaluating change projects effectively, including cost benefit analysis, timeliness and benefits realisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff survey question 12-10 - overall communication is effective improves to at least 75% • Staff survey questions Q14-4 change is managed effectively improves to at least 70%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the 2018 customer services survey to identify improvement plans to address simplification and streamlining of systems and processes and improve customer service • With LTI identify best use of technology for example to manage email and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy 	
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7. Implementation and Reporting

This strategy and the associated action plan will be made operational through the University's Operating Plan and the annual HR Business Plan as well as embedding key elements in the business plans of the Schools and Departments where that is appropriate. Progress will be reported through the University Operating Plan updates to University Executive Group and Council, to JNCC and to other groups as appropriate. Progress reports will also be made available periodically to all staff.

It is proposed to refresh the "Improving our working lives" group to create a membership who will share responsibility for championing the strategy, developing further ideas to bring it to life and to monitor progress and help to resolve implementation issues. Membership should reflect all areas of the university and value diversity and embrace inclusion.

More work is needed to produce a costed implementation plan for future years but at this stage it is anticipated that additional financial investment will be needed in the following areas:

- Leadership and Management development
- Learning and Development for all staff
- Organisational development support in particular for change

as well as investing in time for staff to: attend workshops and other engagement events to shape change that impacts on them; to work together to improve processes and ways of working; and to engage in creative work of benefit to the whole university.

As available funding is difficult to predict for the next five years, it is intended to prioritise activities each year and bid for funding from the available monies each year.

Ruth Davies
Director of HR
March 2018