

“We are very proud of the **University of Gloucestershire**. We believe we offer something special, in our commitment to high quality learning and teaching, the enthusiasm of our staff, and the friendliness of our community.”

**Stephen Marston** Vice-Chancellor

2012-2017  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**

 **UNIVERSITY OF  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**  
at Cheltenham and Gloucester



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# University of Gloucestershire Strategic Plan 2012-2017

## At a Glance:

### Our Mission:

*'Founded on values, centred on students, focused on learning'*

### Our Vision:

As the University of, and for, Gloucestershire, we will be distinctive as an inclusive, student-centred, academic community in which all students and staff are valued, in which all students and staff actively engage, and to which all students and staff are glad to belong.

We will work in partnership with our students to provide them with outstanding teaching, supervision and support. Our teaching will be informed by scholarship and research into the subjects we teach, and innovation in learning and teaching.

We will welcome students from all areas of the UK and overseas, building strong international partnerships and promoting globally responsible leadership. We will serve our community through partnerships to pursue common goals in supporting progression and achievement. We will promote business growth in the locality.

We strive to be a sustainable organisation which contributes to positive socio-economic and environmental futures.

### Our Values:

Nurture; Creativity; Sustainability; Service; Respect; Trust.

### Our Goals:

- 1. To provide students with excellent learning experiences through outstanding learning and teaching support.**

To achieve this we will provide relevant, stimulating and challenging courses that ensure our graduates have the attributes for successful careers. We will build on the work of our National Teaching Fellows (NTFs) to enable all staff to support excellent learning and continuous improvement.

- 2. To promote enterprise, employability and wider economic, social and cultural benefit for the community.**

To achieve this we will equip students with skills for employment through internships, volunteering, work placements and student led activities. We will bring these opportunities together in our Degreeplus initiative. We will support those in employment to achieve career progression and career change and provide a coherent service of support for businesses, enterprise and economic growth in the locality.

- 3. To embed research, scholarship, practice and consultancy in all our activities.**

To achieve this we will ensure all our courses are underpinned by scholarship and research-informed teaching. We will provide academic staff with opportunities for research, professional practice, and consultancy. We will invest in selected areas of research where we can excel.

- 4. To build strong relationships with selected partners for mutual benefit.**

To achieve this we will work closely with our students and the Students' Union as partners in developing an outstanding student experience. We will work with further education colleges locally, developing new strategic partnerships to meet the needs of our communities. We will collaborate with selected partners to extend our international education programmes.

- 5. To be a successful and sustainable organisation.**

To achieve this we will strive to grow through increasing student numbers and income, with robust financial management and investment in our estate. We will maintain our excellent reputation for sustainability. Through our People and Culture Strategy we will support our staff to achieve their potential and career ambitions while contributing to the university's goals.

“Founded on values, centred on students, focused on learning.”



# Context and Purpose

## Background and Purpose

This strategic plan for the University of Gloucestershire sets out our vision, our main goals for the period 2012-2017, and the actions we will take to achieve them. The plan has been developed through wide consultation with staff, students, alumni and partners.

We are one of Britain's newest universities, having achieved university status in 2001. But our origins go back over 150 years, with roots in both the church foundation of teacher education colleges, and the Mechanics' Institutes movement of the Victorian period. We are proud of our traditions and the values that continue to shape us.

We put students at the heart of what we do. We are a university community committed to nurturing and developing the full potential of our students, where both staff and students have a strong sense of belonging. We are the University of, and for, Gloucestershire, promoting economic, social and cultural wellbeing for the communities of this area. But we have also developed our own distinctive forms of excellence with national and international reach, with a leading reputation for our work on sustainability and for our innovation in learning and teaching.

This strategic plan aims to build on these strengths and achievements, while equipping us to meet the challenges of the future. We have already shown that we can overcome major challenges and deliver far-reaching reform. The past few years have made many demands on the university, which we have addressed energetically. We have restructured into three faculties, consolidated our teaching and research on three campuses, invested in some excellent new premises, and restructured our staffing, achieving a much more robust financial position. That gives a strong platform for future development and success.

## Context and Environment

In common with other universities, we face significant challenges in the next five years. The continuing effects of the global economic downturn, and the repercussions of the new student fees regime being introduced following the Browne Report, will create a very different higher education environment. It is impossible at this stage to predict what the effects will be. So the university will have to respond creatively and flexibly as the impacts become clear.

This strategic plan is therefore not a prescription or a detailed blueprint, because it is impossible to tell how higher education will change over the next five years. Rather, it is a statement of strategic purpose and direction, identifying our major goals and priorities. These will inform and shape the decisions we take year by year, as expressed in our annual operating plan. It will be essential to remain agile, taking opportunities as they arise, so long as they are consonant with the mission and direction set out in this plan.

Despite the evident uncertainties and challenges, we are optimistic about the part our university can play in securing a prosperous and rewarding future for the

people of this country. Higher education is becoming more competitive, within the UK and internationally. Students are becoming more demanding, with higher expectations of what universities should provide. The funding outlook is extremely uncertain.

Nonetheless, a flourishing higher education sector is more essential than ever. Good higher education underpins a successful economy based on the creation, transmission and application of knowledge and ideas. It is also a prerequisite for a just, humane and culturally vibrant society, in which all have opportunities to develop their talents, expand their horizons, and achieve their ambitions.

At the University of Gloucestershire, we intend to make our full contribution in offering the types of higher education that will best secure those benefits. We have long sought to provide our students with an excellent education suited to their needs, treating them as people not numbers, and aiming to develop a breadth of understanding and capability. We welcome students who are questioning, who have high expectations and who are demanding. So we are confident of our ability to thrive in a higher education environment which puts increasing focus on informed student choice, on providing a rich, varied and high quality experience for students and on preparing students for success in their subsequent careers.

That is a challenge we welcome. This strategic plan sets out how, over the next five years, we will approach it, through five broad goals. We will continue to build on our national reputation for flexible, innovative, high-quality learning and teaching. We will provide students with a carefully structured range of opportunities to develop the right skills, knowledge and capabilities to succeed in their careers and wider ambitions, including those who are already in employment. We will support those areas of research and professional practice in which we can excel, while ensuring that our teaching is research-informed, and that we apply research for wider economic and social benefit. We will aim to work in partnership, not in isolation, emphasising particularly our close integration with further education colleges and schools in Gloucestershire and surrounds, our contribution to the economy of Gloucestershire through joint work with business and employers, and our strategic links with international partners. And underpinning successful delivery of all these priorities will be excellence in the leadership and management of the university, securing robust financial health and continuing to build our reputation as a leader in sustainability.

All of these goals are interlinked. The common thread that unites them is the commitment to students - outstanding learning and teaching on their formal programmes, a rich and well-structured range of experience beyond the formal programme, research that enriches their learning, partnerships that enable us to recruit the students who will most benefit from what we offer, all within a well-managed environment.

“The plan has been developed through wide consultation with staff, students, alumni and partners.”



## Scope of the Plan

This strategic plan sets out our mission as a university, our vision for the next five years, and the priority actions we will take to achieve our five core goals. It explains how we will measure progress in delivering those goals. We will use the plan as a framework within which each year's operating plan will be drawn up and as a basis for ongoing monitoring and reporting of progress.

Annex A summarises how our major thematic strategies, in areas such as learning and teaching,

estates and human resources, underpin this corporate strategy. Annex B explains how the strategy was developed through consultation with staff, students, alumni and stakeholders.

As a university we are both proud of our past and confident of our future. This strategic plan sets out how we intend to create that future for the benefit of our students, our community and our staff.

## Mission, Vision and Values

This section of the plan sets out our mission as a university, in the form of a short, simple statement of our core purpose. It summarises our vision, in terms of the type of organisation we aspire to be at the end of the five year period. And it states the values that will inform how we operate and behave as individuals and as a community.

**Our Mission** is to be a university which is:

**founded on values, centred on students, focused on learning**

The University of Gloucestershire aims to be distinctive for the values that shape us, drawing on our traditions of service to our locality. We aim to place students at the centre of our activities, in an environment that nurtures and respects them. We see that as the primary contribution we make to our local communities, while seeking to promote social, economic, environmental and academic wellbeing more widely. As a learning-led, research-informed university, offering awards at undergraduate, masters and doctorate level, we aim to achieve excellence through teaching, research and professional development that values creativity and sustainability.

Within this mission we have identified the features that should characterise the university by 2017, given successful delivery of the goals and actions set out in this plan. We recognise that many other universities will share individual features stated in this vision. It is the combination and integration of characteristics that we believe will create a distinctive form of excellence for our university, combined with our location in, and service to, Gloucestershire.

We are a relatively small university by UK standards, with some 10,000 students. That is a strength because it allows us to sustain a sense of belonging in a close-knit community. But as set out in Goal 5 below, we will take opportunities for further growth as they arise, without compromising the distinctive sense of community, because managed growth will bring greater resilience in uncertain times. We will continue to recruit nationally and internationally, as well as regionally, believing that our location and campuses will continue to be attractive to a wide range of students. But we will also strengthen our progression routes from local colleges and schools in Gloucestershire and environs, as discussed in Goal 4 on partnerships, reflecting our responsibility to the communities we serve. We expect to sustain a significant proportion of students aged 18-21, who will wish to study full-time. But we will also aim to expand our service to those students already in employment who wish to pursue lifelong learning in the workplace and students who wish to pursue postgraduate and professional awards. So over time, the balance of our student population is likely to shift towards more older students and more local students. We will increase the variety and flexibility in delivery of our programmes as the increase in higher education fees changes patterns of demand. We will continue to invest in a thriving

Alumni Association to build the attachment of former students to their university.

Our current subject portfolio covers media, arts and technology; business, education and professional services; and applied sciences. Increasingly we have sought to prepare students on all our programmes for successful professional careers. We believe this subject range remains broadly appropriate, although we will keep under constant review how well our subjects and programmes meet evolving student and employer demand. As discussed in Goal 2 we will aim to strengthen the focus on preparation for employment.

**Our Vision** is that, through successful delivery of this strategic plan, in five years' time the University of Gloucestershire will have achieved excellence as a distinctive type of university community.

As the University of, and for, Gloucestershire, we will be recognised for discharging successfully our unique responsibility of service to the communities in our locality and beyond. We will be distinctive as a close-knit, well-integrated academic community in which all students and staff are valued, in which all students and staff actively engage, and to which all students and staff are glad to belong.

We will provide our students with outstanding teaching and supervision, to give them an excellent overall experience that develops their understanding and capability through a carefully considered range of formal and informal opportunities for learning. We will work in partnership with our students to secure continuous improvement in the quality and richness of their experience. We will offer flexible ways to learn, helping people throughout their adult life and career to study with us.

Excellence in teaching, research and community engagement will be equally esteemed. We will support our staff to keep their knowledge current and to be active in their respective fields by undertaking research and scholarship, professional practice or consultancy.

Our teaching will be informed by research into the subjects we teach and into methods used to teach them, with a distinctive commitment to innovation in learning and teaching.

We will welcome students from all areas of the UK and overseas, building strong international partnerships that enable our students and staff to contribute to, and benefit from, international understanding. We will serve our community through strong partnerships with further education colleges and schools to pursue common goals in supporting progression and achievement. We will be a primary motor of business growth in the locality. We will strive to be a sustainable and responsible organisation which contributes to positive environmental, social and economic futures across the communities we serve.



## Mission, Vision and Values

In taking forward this strategy we will observe a set of values. Developed in consultation with our staff and reflecting both the university's civic and church foundations, these define how we want our community, and the students and staff within it, to behave in the way we treat each other and the wider community. We recognise that, if values are to have real impact in shaping organisational culture, they must be more than mere words on a page. We are currently developing a new People and Culture Strategy - see Annex A. That strategy will set out how we will ensure that the values have real meaning in guiding day-to-day activities.

### Our Values:

<b>NURTURE</b>	We are committed to nurturing the development of our students and staff - their academic, social, emotional, physical, cultural, spiritual and moral wellbeing.
<b>CREATIVITY</b>	We pursue excellence in the generation of new knowledge and encourage creativity, wellbeing and the exploration of truth.
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>	We are dedicated to creating sustainable futures across the communities we serve.
<b>SERVICE</b>	We are responsive to the needs of our stakeholders and strive to enhance our services to students, communities and the organisations with whom we work.
<b>RESPECT</b>	We value each member of the university and are committed to relationships characterised by respect for the individual.
<b>TRUST</b>	We promote a climate of trust and accountability underpinned by a commitment to open, honest and transparent communications.

The following sections set out the five main goals that we will pursue over the next five years in order to deliver this mission and vision in accordance with our values. In each case we explain the context for that goal, the actions we will take to achieve it, and the measures we will use to track progress. In each case there is also some boxed text chosen to illustrate one major component of that goal and how we intend to apply it within the university.



# Learning and Teaching

**Goal 1:** To provide students with excellent learning experiences through outstanding teaching and support for learning.

## Context

The University of Gloucestershire is a learning-led university. Promoting the achievement and wellbeing of our students is our overriding purpose.

We are committed to delivering the best possible student experience. We have a strong tradition of delivering high-quality, student-centred teaching, and we seek to support our graduates to be successful in their careers and as citizens. We are committed to innovation in learning and teaching, and to maintaining our national profile in this area, especially in active and participatory learning and demand-led curriculum development.

We are proud of the number of our teaching staff who have been recognised as National Teaching Fellows. We are in the front rank of universities on that measure. It is testament to the excellence of our staff. We are also proud of our performance in the National Student Satisfaction Survey. Last year our overall satisfaction ratings improved by five percentage points. On the measures that relate most directly to learning and teaching we achieved 85% satisfaction.

We will seek to engage students as active participants in the design, delivery and review of their own learning. And we will promote collective discussion and reflection in all course teams about the delivery of their programmes and how they can be improved. We will work with national bodies concerned with higher education policy and academic practice and with other universities to ensure continual enhancement of our provision.

We are committed to ensuring that our teaching practice is well suited to the needs and capabilities of our students. Our recruitment is diverse, welcoming home and international students from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. It is hard to tell how the increase in HE fees will change patterns of enrolment to the university. We will keep under review our admissions practice as the impact becomes clearer, with a view to enrolling those students who will derive greatest benefit from what we have to offer.

Whilst learning and teaching is one of our five strategic goals in its own right, successful achievement in this area will also underpin success in the student-facing dimensions of other strategic goals in this plan. In particular, success in learning and teaching supports development of students' employability and their understanding of sustainability, the embedding of research and scholarship in our practice, and securing organisational success and reputation.

## Actions

To achieve this goal we will pursue the following actions:

- Ensure that our graduates have the necessary attributes for achieving successful careers and becoming active citizens by embedding the following principles in our curriculum:
  - independent and collaborative learning
  - learning for life and employment
  - learning for the future
  - research/practice-informed learning and teaching
- Provide opportunities for students and staff to reflect on, and discuss collectively, ways to improve learning.
- Drawing on the work of the university's National Teaching Fellows (see following box), extend to all teaching and support staff a better understanding of the characteristics of an excellent learning experience at the university.
- Review the portfolio of subjects and disciplines we offer, to ensure it aligns with the university's strengths and purposes, and that our programmes enjoy buoyant demand and good reputation.
- Review our entry requirements and admissions practices to provide opportunities for those most able to benefit from what we offer.
- Increase the flexibility of our delivery of programmes, where there is evidence of student demand, for example through greater provision of two-year intensive, part-time, and top-up programmes.
- Provide a broad-ranging continuing professional development framework for all members of staff who contribute to the learning experience.
- Recognise and reward excellence in academic practice, including Excellence Awards and University Teaching Fellowships. We will support the Students' Union to introduce a student-led Teaching Awards programme.
- Ensure that the academic experience of students is enhanced by effective use of learning technologies.

# Learning and Teaching

We will measure our progress using the following indicators:

1. Student satisfaction ratings, as measured by the National Student Survey, the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey, and internal evaluations.
2. Student achievement, retention and successful completion of their programmes.
3. The Key Information Set, being developed by Higher Education Funding Council for introduction in 2012.
4. Student recruitment against annual plans.
5. Percentage of staff attaining the various categories of Fellowship in the UK Professional Standards Framework.
6. Outcomes from independent, external audit and review of our quality and standards, by the Quality Assurance Agency, Ofsted, Sector Skills Councils, and relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

## Ten things we do well at the University of Gloucestershire

As a contribution to the development of this strategic plan, our National Teaching Fellows reviewed what they considered to be the characteristics of the experience we offer to our students at its best. We will aim to extend those characteristics to all our learning and teaching.

The ten characteristics they identified are:

1. Our students can expect to be treated as individuals, not numbers. We know our students personally and we're interested in their needs and ambitions, even after graduation.
2. In many disciplines, class sizes are smaller than average. This can promote a more interactive teaching environment.
3. We are a welcoming university based in the town of Cheltenham and the city of Gloucester - friendly and safe communities that are small enough for everything to be accessible, but large enough that there's always plenty going on.
4. Our classes are taught by enthusiastic and committed lecturers and professors, most of whom have PhDs or other advanced qualifications, or professional experience appropriate to their disciplines.
5. If students have problems with studying, they can expect speedy and constructive support from staff - we are here to help. We have excellent support networks to assist with student finance, disability support and related services.
6. We aim to inspire and empower students to become critical thinkers with the knowledge and practical skills to play an active role in benefiting society. We believe in the importance of intellectual exploration and encourage our students to challenge established ways of thinking.
7. We encourage students to support each other inside and outside the classroom, to socialise, and to develop as individuals and as members of a learning community.
8. We have more National Teaching Fellows than any other university in the UK relative to our size and we use our research to ensure that what students learn is up to date and relevant.
9. We recognise that what matters to students, and what works best educationally, varies from course to course and from person to person. We believe in an educational approach that is both high quality and flexible. How students are taught will be determined by experts in their subject who are also experts in learning and teaching.
10. We celebrate academic excellence and student successes and we know that people learn best when they are interested and enjoying themselves. So whatever students choose to study, and however their particular courses are organised, we want all students to participate actively in their education. And we want them to enjoy themselves in the process.

# Enterprise, Employability and Community Engagement

**Goal 2: To promote enterprise, employability and wider economic, social and cultural benefit for the community.**

## Context

At the University of Gloucestershire, our teaching and research serve a range of purposes, and our students and staff have various motivations for learning and study. They include personal interest, love of learning and pursuit of knowledge for their own sake, and the satisfaction of gaining new insight and understanding. A university should always honour, and make place for, those purposes.

But we recognise that, amongst their various goals for higher education, our students will generally be looking to secure a rewarding career when they graduate. This is not a new feature of higher education. For centuries, universities have enabled people to gain the skills and qualifications required for entry to the professions. So we want to ensure that every undergraduate student at the University of Gloucestershire has opportunities to develop the skills and capabilities that will best prepare them for employment.

This includes the design and delivery of formal education. But it goes well beyond that in offering a systematic range of experience, with opportunities for students to reflect on what they have learned both from the formal curriculum and more widely.

We are committed to developing enterprising behaviour and a spirit of entrepreneurship in our undergraduates in order to prepare them for the world of work. Our Learning and Teaching Strategy is designed to ensure that every programme includes Learning for Life and Employment. We have an excellent record of innovation in supporting and recognising students' achievements across co-curricular activities, including volunteering. We were amongst the first universities to implement the Higher Education Achievement Report.

Our new Degree*plus* initiative will build on our strengths in this area. It will ensure that all students will have opportunities to develop in terms of their employability and citizenship (see box for details).

We recognise our wider responsibility to promote sustainable economic development in our locality. It is now widely recognised that high-level skills are one essential component of economic growth. Our primary contribution to economic development in Gloucestershire is through the supply of skilled, capable and enterprising graduates, able to take up jobs in the local economy. But there is much more we can do to support businesses in our local area, including professional and specialist short courses, masters level study and professional doctorates.

The university has a well-established portfolio of services to business which support the transfer and application of knowledge in pursuit of value-adding services, products and operations. We are committed to facilitating local business collaboration through sector networks and innovation hubs, providing a focal point

for businesses and the community. We are working with partners, such as the Royal Agricultural College in Cirencester, to provide better integrated services to business.

We are active partners in the work of the Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership. We offer incubation services for the creation of new businesses and graduate start-ups and support for innovation in local companies. Over the lifetime of this strategy we aim to develop these services, gaining recognition as an essential provider of support for business and a vital motor of economic development in the area.

In addition to our economic role, we are committed to playing an active part in creating cultural, social and community benefit. Our staff and students get involved in a wide range of activities that make this a better place to live, such as sponsoring the Cheltenham Festivals, organising the Cheltenham Illustration Awards, running the Gloucestershire Mentoring Scheme, and offering sports coaching in disadvantaged communities in the Gloucester and Cheltenham areas. Many of our students undertake voluntary work, including coaching sports teams, supporting youth groups, acting as Special Constables, and providing support for the elderly. Such volunteering supports individuals and the local community as well as giving students valuable skills and experiences.

## Actions

To achieve this goal we will pursue the following actions:

- Through the new Degree*plus* initiative (see box below), equip students with the skills and capabilities for employment through a wide range of structured activities including volunteering, work placements and student-led activities. This will build on the existing Learning for Life and Employment strand of our Learning and Teaching Strategy.
- Support all students to reflect on, and record, the development of skills, knowledge and capability resulting from their experience.
- Enable people already in employment to achieve career progression and career change through opportunities to gain undergraduate, postgraduate and professional skills and knowledge.
- Provide a coherent and well integrated programme of support for businesses and employers.
- Working with the Local Enterprise Partnership, support enterprise and sustainable economic development in the locality.
- Establish a culture and environment where people are supported to create businesses.
- Support the Students' Union JobShop, which helps students get part-time paid employment across Gloucestershire; and the JobShop Temps services, which places students in part-time paid employment within the university.

# Enterprise, Employability and Community Engagement

We will measure our progress using the following indicators:

1. Student employment after graduation and employment in graduate-level jobs.
2. Number of graduates from the university who gain jobs in Gloucestershire.
3. The number of students benefiting from *Degreeplus*, undertaking programmes with structured access to work placement, work experience and other employability experience.
4. Number and value of projects to support business and sustainable economic development.
5. Number and value of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.
6. Number of people participating in university postgraduate professional programmes and work-based training.
7. Income generated through consultancy projects.
8. Number of students employed through JobShop Temps in the university.

## The *Degreeplus* Programme

In February 2012 the University of Gloucestershire launched the new *Degreeplus* programme designed to give students a gateway to a range of services and opportunities which enable them to develop the experience, skills and attributes which employers value. Through *Degreeplus* students can access:

- careers information, advice and guidance
- skills workshops
- enterprise support
- work placements
- volunteering opportunities
- links with local employers
- a new high-quality workplace internship programme
- graduate vacancies
- the Employable Gloucestershire Graduate Scheme (EGGS)

These opportunities help students develop their employability and confidence, building a portfolio of experience to include in their Higher Education Achievement Report.

*Degreeplus* builds on our experience in running the Graduate Challenge internship programme. This has supported over 150 local organisations by placing a graduate on a four-month placement. The intern delivers a project of value to the business whilst developing their own employability through a Postgraduate Certificate at the university. To date, 83% of participating graduates have found long-term employment as a result of the programme and businesses have reported a significant impact on their own performance.

*Degreeplus* will incorporate our support for student entrepreneurship, including the Business Planning Programme at the University of Gloucestershire (BUG). This has enabled over 200 students to develop their business ideas, supported by workshops and academic expertise. Students have access to local experts including marketing, human resources, sales and legal support, and are mentored through the programme by experienced local entrepreneurs.

*Degreeplus* signals a new commitment by the university to invest in the full breadth of the student experience. It will become a defining characteristic of our undergraduate offer, ensuring our students have the capabilities and confidence for graduate level employment.

## Research and Scholarship

**Goal 3: To embed research, scholarship, practice and consultancy in all our activities.**

### Context

Research activity and the training of research students are fundamental to the identity of higher education. The university aims to provide a high-quality, research-informed curriculum at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, built upon knowledge creation and application and achieving real impact in the outside world. Our goal is to embed research, scholarship, practice and consultancy in all our activities.

Research and scholarly activity will be supported where it enhances the student experience and benefits our strategic aims with regard to reputation, doctoral education, income generation, external engagement, and scholarly activity underpinning teaching.

We are proud of our achievements in research, as illustrated in the box below. As noted in Goal 1, we believe that high quality learning and teaching can only be secured if delivered by staff who have active research interests and professional practice of their own. And applied research and consultancy are major components of the support we want to offer to business under Goal 2.

We are a learning-led, research-informed university. It is integral to our mission that we should develop excellence in research and practice in selected fields and seek peer recognition through the Research Excellence Framework. We will therefore continue to invest both in areas of proven research excellence and in areas with clear potential for research excellence, which align with the subject strengths and strategic priorities of the university.

### Actions

To achieve this goal we will pursue the following actions:

- Ensure that all courses are informed by a combination of scholarship, research, and professional practice.
- Provide all teaching staff with opportunities to identify and pursue through appropriate means their ambitions for research, or professional practice, or consultancy, as well as ensuring all teaching staff pursue scholarship in their subject.
- Develop a successful submission to the Research Excellence Framework.
- Identify which research areas the university should prioritise for investment with a view to achieving excellence. We will apply a transparent approach to decision-making for research support, based on cost-value analysis.

- Provide opportunities for students to engage with research at undergraduate as well as postgraduate level.
- Invest in the postgraduate research community and develop its ethos for the benefit of students, supervisors and other researchers.

We will measure our progress using the following indicators:

1. Performance in the Research Excellence Framework 2014 by those research units selected for entry.
2. Level of research and consultancy income.
3. Level of postgraduate research (PGR) student recruitment.
4. PGR student completion rates.
5. Satisfaction of PGR students, as measured by the postgraduate research experience survey.

### We are involved in a wide range of research at the University of Gloucestershire

We have:

- a recognised Centre of Excellence for rural research located in the Countryside and Community Research Institute.
- work of world-leading quality in five research areas, according to the government's last Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) results.
- eleven units of assessment judged by peer review to have research that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
- a thriving postgraduate research community with traditional and professional doctorates, including a highly successful Doctor of Business Administration award.
- research centres in all faculties.
- substantial research projects funded through European grants in subjects from sustainability to health.
- a high percentage of staff with doctorates, approaching 100% in some areas.
- a wide range of staff involved in the supervision of research degrees and a well-developed programme of staff development to support them.

“We are a learning-led,  
research-informed university.”



## Partnerships

### Goal 4: To build strong relationships with selected partners for mutual benefit.

#### Context

Many of the university's objectives will be more successfully achieved by working closely with partners, rather than acting in isolation. So, as one of our strategic goals for the next five years, we want to build a range of strong partnerships.

We will make this a priority in three areas - partnership with our students; partnership with further education colleges in Gloucestershire; and partnership with selected international organisations. In addition, we will continue to value our successful partnerships with local schools and academies.

We see our students and the Students' Union as critical partners in the success of the university. If the university is to deliver an excellent experience for students, that must be built on a genuine sense of shared purpose. Students need to be actively engaged with teaching and support staff in evaluating the effectiveness of learning and teaching so that they play an active role in securing constant improvement. We are committed to supporting the development of the Students' Union, helping them wherever possible to enhance the services they provide to students. For example, as noted under the Learning and Teaching Goal, we are supporting the Students' Union to introduce a student-led Teacher Awards programme. The senior management of the university will continue to work closely with the Students' Union, involving them in key discussions about the development of the university and its priorities.

We believe this is a good time to build stronger partnerships with local further education (FE) colleges. As the University of Gloucestershire, we have a responsibility to promote access to higher education for people living in the county, and particularly those from disadvantaged communities. The increase in higher education fees from 2012 makes it imperative to offer a variety of forms of higher education, with more flexibility to progress from college to university at different points and accessible in different locations. For all these reasons, we believe it is right to build a much stronger partnership between the university and local colleges over the next five years. We already have, and wish to develop further, a strong network of partnerships with colleges in Gloucestershire and beyond. But the creation of South Gloucestershire and Stroud College and the merger of Gloucestershire College with Royal Forest of Dean College represents an important reconfiguration of further education in Gloucestershire, offering an opportunity for a deeper form of strategic partnership. More detail is provided in the text box.

We have well-established partnerships with local schools, in teacher education, outreach and progression. Our work in teacher education dates back to our foundations in the 1840s. It continues to be an important part of our mission as a university and our service to the community. We have developed close working relations with primary and secondary schools

in Gloucestershire and surrounds and we are proud that Ofsted rated our primary PGCE 'outstanding'. Throughout the lifetime of this strategy we will continue to strengthen our teacher education provision, working in close partnership with Gloucestershire schools. Our Outreach team works with schools, colleges and other groups to help pupils, parents and advisers increase their understanding of higher education. We run a successful Compact scheme, on-campus events such as taster days, summer schools, and open days, as well as in-school presentations, workshops and mentoring programmes.

The third priority area for strengthening partnerships is through our international agenda. We believe the recruitment of international students and staff, and academic partnerships with overseas and UK providers, greatly enhance the type of experience we can offer for all our students. We will ensure that our international activities are consonant with our academic purpose and values as a university. The market for international higher education is highly competitive and the regulatory environment has become more demanding. In future we will aim to continue to expand our international activities but focus on larger, more strategic partnerships with overseas providers. Those partnerships may extend to student and staff exchange, bespoke training, and joint academic delivery in-country as well as progression to the UK.

#### Actions

To achieve this goal we will pursue the following actions:

- Ensure student course and campus representatives can actively participate in improving learning and teaching and the wider student experience.
- Update the Student Charter on an annual basis, in full partnership with the Students' Union.
- Develop a new strategic partnership with Gloucestershire College and South Gloucestershire and Stroud College to ensure better integrated planning and delivery of higher education to meet the needs of local communities.
- Strengthen progression routes to higher education through a set of Compact partnerships and progression agreements with local schools and further education colleges.
- Strengthen our teacher education provision through partnerships with Gloucestershire primary and secondary schools.
- Increase high quality international recruitment to the university.
- Develop wider, more strategic relationships for international activities with a selected number of partners.



## Partnerships

We will measure our progress using the following indicators:

1. Student satisfaction with the Students' Union, as indicated in the National Student Survey.
2. Progression of students to the university from partner further education colleges and schools.
3. Higher level skills gaps reported by employers in Gloucestershire.
4. Scale of Compact schemes with students from partner schools in the locality.
5. Proportion of students from Gloucestershire.
6. Satisfaction of international students.
7. Number of international student numbers.
8. Scale of international collaborative partnerships and revenue received.

### Strategic Partnership with local further education colleges

We are developing a new strategic partnership with two major local further education colleges - Gloucestershire College and South Gloucestershire and Stroud College.

Our shared goal is to raise the quality, range and accessibility of higher education in Gloucestershire, through a better-integrated higher education offer for Gloucestershire underpinned by a collaborative HE strategy. This will ensure that more people in the county can benefit from higher education that is accessible, appropriate and affordable for them.

The partnership will enable the university and the colleges to work together to provide flexible, efficient and innovative delivery of education, training and business support, within a unified, rigorous quality assurance framework which guarantees high standards.

Over time the partnership could include: validation of HE programmes by the university, within a single, shared quality and regulatory framework; joint mapping and review of HE provision in the locality, and how emerging student and employer demands can be better met; shared curriculum development and teaching; and use of shared services.

As a first step the university has agreed with the two colleges to appoint a joint project manager to scope what forms the partnership could take and how best to pursue implementation. The three partners will collectively and continuously consider how best to develop the joint strategy.

## A Successful Organisation

### Goal 5: To be a successful and sustainable organisation.

#### Context

The previous four goals have focused on the outcomes we want to achieve in terms of services to our students and the wider community. But in order to achieve those goals we must also be successful as an organisation. So our fifth goal is to ensure that the university is well-led and managed, financially robust, and with a culture and way of working that enables all our people to give of their best. We will also maintain our commitment to sustainable development.

We have already instituted a range of reforms to ensure the continuing success of the organisation. We have a new leadership team in place, we have reformed our governance, we have consolidated into three faculties, we have rationalised our campuses, and we have restructured our staff. We are now making a healthy financial surplus. Robust performance management and rigorous financial control will remain essential given the major reforms now in train to the structure and funding of higher education. Annex A summarises the various thematic strategies that will underpin this goal, including those for Finance, Estates, ICT, and People and Culture.

The university is relatively small by UK standards, with some 10,000 students. That has advantages in terms of the sense of community and belonging which characterises the university. But it also creates some risks, particularly when the rapid changes in the wider higher education environment are putting a premium on agility and responsiveness. So over the period of this strategy we will look for opportunities to expand our student numbers in home undergraduate, home postgraduate and international categories. In seeking that expansion we will work with partners wherever appropriate, as stated in Goal 4. We have not set a target for our optimum size by 2017 but will aim to balance the advantages of growth in financial and organisational terms without compromising that sense of community that is distinctive to the university.

We will maintain our ethical traditions, encouraging staff and students to act on the university's values. This will be a feature of our new People and Culture Strategy, which is currently being developed. It will build on the results of our 2011 Staff Perception Survey and aim to create a working environment based on respect, trust and engagement, where staff are proud to belong to the university and confident that the university will support their career development.

Our estate is one of the university's great assets. We have three attractive campuses in Cheltenham and Gloucester and have recently invested in new premises for the Media, Arts and Technology Faculty. Our location is attractive to both students and staff and we believe will enable us to continue to recruit successfully nationally and internationally. The Council has recently approved a new 10-year Estates Strategy - summarised in Annex A. Our priorities through to 2017 are to sustain investment in keeping our premises attractive and fit for purpose, while improving space utilisation.

The university has achieved an international reputation for our commitment to sustainable development. We have consistently been placed in the top three universities in the People and Planet Green League for the past three years. We perform well in the Universities That Count benchmarking scheme, ranking first in Education for Sustainability. We lead the United Nations University accredited Regional Centre of Expertise in Sustainability for the Severn area. We are leading the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Leadership and Governance project which seeks to mainstream sustainability education into quality frameworks in higher education.

This commitment reflects our wider values and traditions as a university and will remain a central theme for the future. Sustainability is a cross-cutting, corporate commitment, which needs to be manifest in our learning and teaching, in our research, and in the way we manage our operations. That is why sustainability is located within this overall organisational goal, rather than being seen as restricted to, say, learning and teaching or research. See boxed text for more detail.

#### Actions

To achieve this goal we will pursue the following actions:

- Achieve increased revenue from a broader range of income sources.
- Take opportunities for growth in student numbers.
- Improve our student support services for the welfare of students.
- Maintain robust and rigorous financial controls and business planning systems, to achieve good value for money and meet targets.
- Refine our model for allocating workloads to ensure we are making best use of our staff resources in achieving the university's objectives.
- Develop, re-design and streamline our business processes.
- Introduce a comprehensive career development programme for staff, including management and leadership training.
- Develop a culture based on our values, with transparent communication.
- Invest in our estate to ensure that our premises are fit for purpose and well-maintained.
- Support our sustainability plans and activities to maintain our leading position in sustainability benchmarking.
- Support the activities of the United Nations University Regional Centre of Expertise in Sustainability to build strong partnerships across the Severn region.

## A Successful Organisation

We will measure our progress using the following indicators:

1. Achievement of financial targets, including annual operating surplus and liquidity.
2. Growth in income, from a diversified range of sources.
3. Level of financial investment in our estate and capital infrastructure.
4. The state of repair and fitness for purpose of our buildings, as assessed in the estate condition surveys.
5. Equality and diversity within the university community, as assessed in the annual Equal Opportunities survey.
6. Staff satisfaction levels as reported in biennial staff perception survey.
7. The university's position in relevant league tables, as one indication of reputation and standing.
8. Performance in the Learning in Future Environments (LiFE) index, which assesses sustainability achievements in universities. [www.thelifeindex.org.uk/about-life](http://www.thelifeindex.org.uk/about-life)

### Sustainable Development at the University of Gloucestershire

Unsustainable practices are deepening the impact of environmental degradations, extending inequalities in our society and across the globe, and limiting quality of life. The university recognises its responsibility to build consideration of sustainability into our decision making and our operations, and we work in partnership with others to respond to these local-to-global challenges, constructing more positive futures for all.

The university has carved an international reputation in the area of sustainability. That has helped to increase our profile, attracted significant funding, and improved our corporate performance in this area.

The new sustainability ambitions of the university for 2012-17 are focused on improving:

- performance - improve sustainability performance and meet our carbon commitments

- profile - as a leader in sustainability with a reputation in education for sustainability
- participation - engage students, staff and stakeholders in sustainability activities
- partnerships - build partnerships locally, nationally and internationally in the area of sustainability

whilst retaining the ambition of embedding sustainability across the full range of university activities.

Over the lifetime of the strategic plan, the university will:

- embed sustainability into the design and delivery of teaching programmes as a required component of initial course approval and revalidation and review for all programmes.
- support academic departments through professional development opportunities for staff.
- increase student volunteering and work-focused learning opportunities in sustainability.
- align the university's commitment to sustainability with the *Degreeplus* programme to progress employability and business development, and link the concepts of sustainability and responsible leadership in relevant programmes.
- work with the Countryside and Community Research Institute and the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative to support research development in the area of sustainability.
- work with the Teaching, Learning and Innovation team to support the latest teaching development associated with Education for Sustainability.
- extend partnerships in sustainability, primarily through the United Nations University Regional Centre of Expertise in Sustainability Education.
- improve our carbon emissions in transport, waste, food, and procurement.
- support professional departments to set and progress their own sustainability targets and contribute to improving the sustainability performance of the university as assessed by external indices and benchmarking schemes.

## Centred on Students

Our commitment to students is woven throughout this strategy. The following draws together from across the five strategic goals a summary of actions relating to students.

**Goal 1: We will provide students with excellent learning experiences through outstanding teaching and support for learning:**

- Ensure that our graduates have the necessary attributes for achieving successful careers and becoming active citizens.
- Provide opportunities for students to reflect on, and discuss collectively, ways to improve learning.
- Increase the flexibility of our delivery of programmes, where there is evidence of student demand.
- Support the Students' Union to implement a student-led Teaching Awards scheme.
- Ensure that the academic experience of students is enhanced by effective use of learning technologies.
- Review our entry requirements to provide opportunities for those most able to benefit.

**Goal 2: We will promote enterprise and employability for our students:**

- Through the new Degreeplus initiative, equip students with the skills and capabilities for employment through a wide range of structured activities including volunteering, work placements and student-led activities.
- Support all students to reflect on, and record, the development of skills, knowledge and capability resulting from their experience.
- Enable people already in employment to achieve career progression and career change through opportunities to gain undergraduate, postgraduate and professional skills and knowledge.
- Enable students to gain the skills and confidence to set up their own enterprise.
- Support the Students' Union JobShop, and the JobShop Temps services.

**Goal 3: Students will benefit from research, scholarship, practice and consultancy undertaken by our staff:**

- Secure that all teaching is informed by scholarship, research, practice and consultancy.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage with research at undergraduate as well as postgraduate level.
- Invest in the postgraduate research community and develop its ethos for the benefit of students, supervisors and other researchers.

**Goal 4: Students will benefit from strong relationships with selected partners:**

- Treat students and the Students' Union as primary and active partners in building the success of the university.
- Ensure comprehensive arrangements for student course and campus representatives to participate actively in improving learning and teaching and the wider student experience.
- Update the Student Charter on an annual basis, in full partnership with the Students' Union.
- Through partnerships with FE colleges and schools, extend progression routes for Gloucestershire students into HE, with a wider range of flexible opportunities for study.
- Through partnerships with international organisations, extend opportunities for overseas students to benefit from UK HE, enriching our international diversity to the benefit of the whole student body.

**Goal 5: Students will benefit from a successful and sustainable organisation:**

- Take opportunities for growth in student numbers, without undermining our close-knit sense of community.
- Invest in maintaining our estate as an attractive location for students.
- Invest in the skills and expertise of our staff in teaching and supporting students.
- Improve our student support services for the welfare of students.
- Provide opportunities for students to gain experience and understanding of sustainability.



“Our commitment to students is woven throughout this strategy.”

## Annex A

### Underpinning strategies

This Annex summarises the specific thematic strategies which underpin the overall university strategy. They are in different stages of development - some final, some in draft. They have all informed the preparation of the university strategy. As progress with each thematic strategy is reviewed, one factor will be to ensure there is full alignment with the implementation of the university strategy.

#### Learning and Teaching Strategy

The Learning and Teaching Strategy sets out how the university aims to provide all students with excellent learning experiences through outstanding learning and teaching support. It was approved by Academic Board in June 2011 after full consultation with students, staff, and other stakeholders, including employers.

The consultation addressed the challenge of ensuring that teaching programmes remain fit-for-purpose in the more demanding higher education climate we now face.

The Learning and Teaching Strategy identifies four priorities which have been directly incorporated in the Learning and Teaching Goal of the strategic plan. They are:

- independent and collaborative learning
- learning for life and employment
- learning for the future
- research/practice-informed learning and teaching

These priorities aim to ensure that our curriculum equips our students to enjoy productive careers and to act as responsible citizens in the 21st century.

The Learning and Teaching Strategy articulates the attributes of the successful Gloucestershire graduate. It also identifies a set of attributes for the university's staff in order to ensure that the priorities for learning and teaching inform their practice and to enable them to access and apply knowledge about best practice in the sector.

The successful implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy will be delivered through an enhanced programme of staff development activities for all staff who contribute to the student learning experience.

#### Research Strategy

The university's Research Strategy is currently in development, led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Dean of Research.

The strategy will start from the presumption that research activity is fundamental to the identity, mission and reputation of the university. The strategy will identify four types of activity that the university should pursue:

1. Postgraduate research: the supervision and training of postgraduate researchers. As well as contributing

to the wider economy and society in their future careers, postgraduate researchers form the feedstock for future academics and research leaders.

2. Research, practice and scholarship: activity to support subject knowledge and teaching, professional research activity, and the development of research-informed teaching. All academic staff are expected to engage in research and scholarly activity to the extent necessary to ensure the currency of the knowledge and expertise they deploy in teaching and other knowledge exchange contexts. This is also necessary to undertake postgraduate research student supervision successfully.
3. Income generating research: it is important, both reputationally and financially, for the university to develop research profiles capable of attracting competitive funding for commissioned research, and user-defined work for external agencies and parties.
4. Research Excellence Framework (REF) preparation: the university intends to submit research of at least internationally excellent quality for peer review in the government's Research Excellence Framework assessment.

It is central to our approach to research that it links closely to teaching, increases business development, and enhances the university's profile. To achieve this we will embed scholarship, practice and applied research in all our activities. We will also selectively support research in those areas of our activity where we can demonstrate actual or potential excellence and which align with the university's corporate priorities.

#### International Strategy

The university's International Strategy is currently under development, led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

Our international recruitment currently involves:

- direct recruitment of an international contingent of students via a network of progression arrangements and overseas agencies. The future aim is to strengthen current arrangements and expand their range and number in a focused and targeted way. The strategy will identify emerging markets, based on robust market research. This method of recruitment is proven to be successful in terms of student numbers and conversion. However, the past five years have seen a change in the international recruitment environment. Whilst UK higher education is still highly regarded, overseas institutions are seeking more strategic partnership packages that include exchange, bespoke training and joint academic delivery in-country as well as progression to the UK.
- delivery of university courses via strategic collaborative partnerships with internationally located higher education providers. This includes franchised and validated delivery where the partner either solely delivers the award or it is delivered jointly with the university. University courses are also delivered overseas in full by university employed staff via an off-campus delivery model.

## Annex A

The university's primary goal is to sustain, and grow over time, recruitment of students from the UK and European Union. But through our International Strategy we also want to strengthen our recruitment of overseas students and international collaborative partnerships. We will identify a number of key criteria against which our international activities will be measured to ensure that they align with the university's core educational values and are both ethical and sustainable in the long term. We will aim to deliver the strategy through appropriate, flexible packages that are sustainable and competitive, delivering a high quality educational experience to all our students, both at home and overseas.

The strategy will build on existing strong relationships with overseas agents and collaborative partners, identify ways in which new partnerships may be developed, develop our international alumni networks through the Alumni Office, and ensure that the university can support the student experience from application to graduation and beyond. Over time, we intend to focus on fewer but stronger and more strategic, international partnerships with selected partners, covering a broader range of collaborative activities.

### Business Development Strategy

The university has recently appointed a Director of Business Support, jointly with the Royal Agricultural College. The intention of this joint appointment is to enable the university and the college to provide a better integrated service to businesses in Gloucestershire and beyond.

Following that appointment, we are currently reviewing our business services programme. This will produce a five-year strategic plan which will aim to deliver year-on-year growth in income-generating activity, through a coherent set of business-support services, aligned to national policy and driven by the economic needs of the business community. We will work closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership in developing and implementing the plan to increase our contribution to economic development and innovation in Gloucestershire and beyond.

The delivery of business support will be through four channels that enable the university to support target sectors, build our reputation for business engagement and raise revenue through the provision of valued services:

- **Income Generation:** The university will prioritise its existing services to business around identified centres of academic excellence, providing services on a demand-led basis. The delivery of consultancy, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and contract research will be driven by the opportunity to grow and diversify our income base by providing access to knowledge, expertise and facilities.
- **Specialist Centres:** These will be drawn from clusters of existing expertise to deliver services to business, applied research, consultancy and skills. Further centres will be developed to support the emerging priorities of business.
- **Student Start-up and Business Creation:** We will develop a centre for innovation which will provide programmes and an environment that encourages new business start-ups by students, graduates, and local entrepreneurs. The centre will provide an environment where people can explore ideas and opportunities, supported by a framework of expertise and skills development.
- **Networks and Partnerships:** As an institution that provides a place for businesses to engage and innovate, we aim to become a focal point for sector events and collaborative activity. The aspiration is to become the place of choice for businesses and employers in Gloucestershire and beyond to network and gain access to the university's resources, including its staff and students.

### Strategy for Sport

Sport and physical activity makes a significant contribution to the student experience at the university. Every year approximately 1,000 students represent the university in national and international competition, while a further 1,000 students take part in our new UNlversal Sport programme. A new department, University of Gloucestershire Sport, takes the lead in these areas and, in collaboration with the Students' Union, seeks to build student capabilities, partnerships, and enterprise opportunities in order to support best practice in the delivery of competitive and recreational sport. In addition, the department is responsible for a range of innovative outreach programmes which contribute directly to outreach, local communities and to the Degreeep/us initiative.

In the coming five years University of Gloucestershire Sport aims to:

- support the Students' Union in securing a Top 30 placing in the British universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) league table.
- introduce 3,000 new participants, both staff and students, to sporting, exercise or physical activity opportunities.
- gain national recognition of best practice in sports delivery through National Governing Body of Sport awards or BUCS awards for our Students' Union.
- develop a unique set of services and support structures to enable students with disabilities to play a full part in the sporting life of the institution.
- deliver 150 student placements each year through our unique outreach programmes, including SportsCVs, Onside, UNlversal Sport, Sport Malawi, No Limits and PhASE, the student enterprise.
- establish sport as a major element of new strategic partnerships with FE colleges and schools, extending Compact arrangements to five targeted institutions outside the county.

## Annex A

### Sustainability Strategy

The Sustainability Strategy proposes new directions for sustainability that support the priorities of the university's new strategic plan. The revised strategy aligns with the employability, business development and local engagement agendas, whilst at the same time improving staff and student engagement opportunities in sustainability. The strategy plays to the university strengths in areas of learning and teaching for sustainability, local and international partnerships and a whole-of-institutional approach to sustainability.

Progress in sustainability will be assessed across four main areas associated with performance, profile, participation and partnerships. Key Performance Indicators are proposed to measure progress in these areas.

**Performance:** Be a university which continuously improves its sustainability performance and meets its carbon commitments.

During the life of this strategic plan the university will:

- establish and progressively develop, strong performance scores in the new LiFE index, building on track records of scores in the former Universities That Count scheme.
- improve our carbon reduction institution-wide to meet our 40% goal as agreed with HEFCE.
- develop and monitor sustainability KPIs for professional departments.

**Profile:** Be recognised as a sector leader in sustainability, and be known for our distinctive profile in education for sustainability and its connections with employability.

During the life of this strategic plan the university will:

- maintain a high profile in national award schemes (Green Gowns) and ranking exercises eg People and Planet.
- provide advice for, and engage in, external sustainability activities (prioritising education and employability agendas).
- maintain positive coverage of sustainability in the regional and national media.

**Participation:** Be a university which actively engages staff, students and stakeholders in sustainability activities.

During the life of this strategic plan the university will:

- improve range and quality of student engagement opportunities and learning experiences as reflected in student surveys and associated data.
- improve staff engagement across departments and increase ownership of the agenda as reflected in the staff survey and captured in annual Sustainability Reports.

**Partnerships:** Be a university which builds and supports partnerships locally, nationally and internationally in the area of sustainability.

During the life of this strategic plan the university will:

- increase participation of local and regional stakeholders in university sustainability initiatives.
- extend new business development, enterprise and research partnerships in sustainability which generates income for professional and academic development across the university.

### People and Culture Strategy

The university's strategic plan responds to significant change in higher education policy and to the increasing expectations of students and the communities we serve. Achieving the five goals of the strategy, in a way that is consistent with our values, will depend largely on the talent, knowledge, skills, commitment and flexibility of our staff.

We are developing a People and Culture Strategy building on the 2009-12 Human Resources (HR) Strategy. Its preparation is being led by our new Director of HR. It will provide the framework for the work of the HR team but all staff will share responsibility for delivering it.

We aspire to enable everybody, whatever their role, to have a more productive and rewarding experience of working at the university and contributing towards the university's goals. We want all staff to enjoy an open and positive working environment, designed to ensure that we can successfully deliver the university's goals through making best use of the talents of our people. It is essential that staff work together well, perform to the best of their abilities, and continuously develop and improve, in order to seize opportunities and meet the challenges we face.

So far staff have had open discussions with the Vice-Chancellor and discussed the results of the 2011 staff survey within their work areas. From this feedback we are developing an understanding of what people value, their concerns, and what they would like to change. We recognise that there is a great deal to do if we are to achieve the working environment and culture that people want. We also recognise that the rapidly evolving higher education policy framework means that the university will have to manage staff resources flexibly to meet changing patterns of student demand and new organisational priorities. There will be further opportunities for staff, Trade Unions, Council members, student representatives and partners to engage in discussions about our culture.



## Annex A

The strategy is likely to necessitate actions in the following areas:

- open and honest communication
- effective people management, tackling poor performance and rewarding good performance
- flexible career pathways, recognising that people have different career goals
- personal and professional development
- comprehensive leadership and management development
- promoting productivity and innovation, given that our wage bill is our single biggest cost and must be managed effectively within continuing budget constraints
- diversity and equal opportunities
- staff wellbeing (including all staff treating each other with respect)
- accessible HR policies that allow for appropriate flexibility within clear boundaries

We will be honest about what is achievable and sustainable within the resources available.

### Finance Strategy

The Finance Strategy is being reviewed and updated to align with the new corporate strategy and to reflect current changes in higher education - notably, uncertainty of student demand, phasing out of old funding models, the introduction of a new fees regime, and a range of new higher education providers keen to enter the market when legislation permits.

The focus of the previous Finance Strategy was to strengthen significantly the financial operating position of the university, which it has achieved.

In developing the new Finance Strategy alongside the new Corporate Plan, Annual Operating Plan and Faculty and Departmental Business Plans, we will deliver an integrated approach whereby business and financial issues are considered alongside academic plans.

The Finance Strategy will focus on a range of key financial goals. It will enable us to:

- ensure the continued financial sustainability of the university
- increase and diversify our income
- provide resources to support our corporate priorities
- provide a framework for improving financial performance
- integrate with other strategies

The Finance Strategy includes a range of financial targets, developed to reflect the new financial regime we have entered, and encompasses a wide range of indicators.

### ICT Strategy

The emphasis of the ICT Strategy will be to move the focus away from the technology itself, to the benefits that ICT can provide to transform the way the university operates, including how it can be better integrated to support learning and teaching.

In support of the five goals of the university's strategic plan, the ICT Strategy will:

- align with the Learning and Teaching Strategy, supporting curriculum delivery both on and off campus. The student learning experience will be enhanced by investment in systems and technologies such as mobile services, personalised student portals and 24-hour access to ICT.
- introduce new web sites and a university-wide Customer Relationship Management system which will enable students and staff to collaborate effectively and facilitate links with external partners.
- support the work of researchers, international students and partners, and consultancy activities in and outside the university by focusing effort on remote access and central storage facilities.
- assist the university's collaborative partnerships through the effective use of technologies.
- help the business to operate at optimum performance through the effective use of ICT, developing systems to support re-engineered business processes.

### Estates Strategy

The university estate consists of three campus sites hosting teaching, learning and student accommodation. We have one further site housing student accommodation and eight residential halls in Gloucestershire. The Estates Strategy describes a number of core objectives that support the themes and goals set out within the strategic plan. The strategy contains targets for the further consolidation of the estate, which will enable an affordable maintenance investment plan and will support the academic resources plan.

There is a 10-year maintenance investment plan and an academic resources plan to refurbish, upgrade and develop assets to provide appropriate facilities that will effectively support learning, teaching and research activities. In addition, the delivery of the carbon management plan will reduce the cost of operation of buildings and associated services. We aim to increase income generating opportunities through better utilisation of the estate, for instance through our International Strategy including summer schools and pre-sessional activities. The Residential Strategy plans to consolidate campuses which in turn will support extended access to a range of facilities and services.

## Annex B

### The Strategic Plan Development Process

The preparation of this strategic plan was launched in September 2011 by the new Vice-Chancellor, Stephen Marston. The university's previous strategy covered the period 2009-12. So it was opportune to review and update the university strategy in the light of the new higher education landscape.

To direct the review, we established a Strategic Plan Project team consisting of senior academics from each faculty and representatives from learning and teaching, research, marketing, student services, and business performance and planning.

The project team started by holding a series of focus groups comprised of academic and Student Services staff from each of the university's three campuses. These focus groups examined the university's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as the future state of the university in 2017. We also reviewed the university's positioning in the sector, supported by evidence-based market research.

Members of University Council were consulted on the project team's strategic planning approach and timescales. A special meeting of Council was held to discuss emerging findings in November 2011.

Based on the outcomes of the three focus groups, the university consulted more widely with its students, stakeholders and staff through Strategic Plan Surveys. The aim was to collect a wide range of views on the key strategic priorities and a proposed future vision of the university. In parallel the university's senior managers and National Teaching Fellows were canvassed for their input, with the NTFs conducting a separate discussion on what characterises excellent learning and teaching at the university (see Goal 1 for the results).

#### Stakeholder Consultation – Top 5 Strategic Priorities:

1. Producing students skilled and prepared for employment.
2. Serving students from a broad range of backgrounds and offering routes into higher education.
3. Providing a caring and supportive student experience.
4. Working with local and regional partners in a strategic way.
5. Encouraging and supporting enterprise, innovation and business development.

#### Staff Consultation – Top 5 Strengths:

1. Student Support: staff are generally accessible and willing to engage with students, for example Student HelpZones.
2. Location: we are the only university in Gloucestershire. Because of our location we have attractive surroundings, confidence in personal safety and good links to major cities.

3. Size: the university's small-medium size enables a friendly and sociable atmosphere.
4. High quality learning and teaching.
5. High calibre staff that are committed to ensuring the university is successful.

Following these consultations a series of common strategic objectives emerged. These were analysed and related objectives with common attributes grouped into five emerging strategic themes:

- learning and teaching
- enterprise, employability and wider economic benefit
- research
- partnerships
- successful organisation (cross-cutting themes and strategic enablers)

As these strategic themes emerged, and building on the feedback from the consultations, the Strategic Plan Project team developed a new Vision Statement and proposed the new Mission Statement.

Throughout the strategic planning activity the Strategic Plan Project team liaised with colleagues to ensure established and emerging faculty and departmental strategic plans were aligned with the themes, goals and actions outlined in the emerging corporate strategic plan.

The strategic plan provides the framework for deriving annual operating plans for the university including annual priorities and targets. Progress against the actions will be regularly reported to Council and the Executive.

Once the five strategic themes, associated goals, actions and KPIs had been compiled, along with the Mission and Vision Statements, there was further consultation with students, the Students' Union, University Executive and Council before the final version was approved and published in February 2012.

#### Student Consultation – Top 5 aspects of our students' learning experiences:

1. The quality of teaching staff: expert, enthusiastic, engaging, dedicated, supportive, approachable.
2. The quality of learning and teaching: the structure and variety of the curriculum, as well as the different learning styles catered for.
3. Placements and volunteering opportunities that bridge the gap between academia and the real world.
4. Research and/or practice informed lecturers with national and international reputations.
5. The opportunity to work in small groups: cultivating team skills and interacting with people from a wide range of backgrounds.

“The aim was to collect a wide range of views on the key strategic priorities and a proposed future vision of the university.”



TC001 TC003  
TC102 TC100  
TC110 YK112  
TC114  
YC006 TC005

