Our coat of arms comprises a shield with azure background and two fesses in gold, each based on the shape of an open book. The books represent the University’s focus on learning and scholarship.

A strew of white estoils (a scattering of small stars) represents navigation, which has played a key role in the history of the city and the University. The central section with escallops (scallop shells) in gold, represents pilgrimage, this draws on Plymouth’s marine heritage, and also makes reference to the Pilgrim Fathers, who left England for the last time from Plymouth.

A pelican and golden hind support the shield and reflect both the original and later, better known, name of Sir Francis Drake’s ship. The sailing ship in full sail, and the design of the shield replicated on the sail, also links in with Plymouth’s maritime history.

The Latin motto on the scroll reads Indagate Fingite Invenite – “Explore Dream Discover” and reflects the University’s ambitions for its students. The origin of the quote is unconfirmed with it being commonly attributed to both Mark Twain and H. Jackson Brown.
Our mission

Advancing knowledge and transforming lives through education and research.

Through teaching, learning, research and innovation we work in partnership with our students, staff, community, business and the professions to drive social inclusion, economic prosperity and sustainability in Plymouth, across the nation and throughout the world.

Our vision

To be the enterprise university, promoting a bold, adventurous spirit and creativity in all that we do.

Enterprise defines us, what we do and how we do it. It captures our mind-set and culture and our pioneering spirit. By placing the concept and practice of enterprise at the heart of what we do, we want to empower our students and staff to deliver on their talents in achieving our mission.

Our values

As a values-based organisation our ethos and culture drives what we do and how we do it. Our working culture is one of trust, empowerment, transparency and accountability that enables effective leadership and promotes great decision-making at all levels.

We are:

Spirited in providing an ambitious, inspiring, enterprising and friendly learning and working environment for our students and staff.

Connected to our communities in taking a partnership approach with individuals and organisations to spark creativity and maximise our impact.

Creative in celebrating and respecting difference in background, identity, ideas and beliefs and encouraging a creative and inclusive working and learning environment.

Pioneering by embedding an enterprising approach through all of our activities, creating an environment where good ideas are welcomed and fostered, tested and acted upon.

Expert in what we do through the valuable contributions, passions and talents of our staff, students and partners.

Empowering in enabling our students, staff and partners to think for themselves, make their own decisions, and make a difference.

Enterprising in all that we do and how we do it.
By the year 2020, Plymouth University is a university of first choice for our students, our staff and our partners.

We are a world-leading modern, contemporary university and have fostered a dynamic and agile culture where great decisions are made at all levels each day. We have exceptional levels of student satisfaction, undertake world-class research with impact and our enterprising approach along with a commitment to raising aspirations and innovation is making a real and sustainable difference to our students, staff, partners and society on a global stage.

Who we are

Plymouth is a university with a unique partnership approach with our students, a deep connection with the sea and a spirit of discovery and enterprise that drives world-class research and underpins excellence in all that we do.

We benefit from the beautiful and diverse surroundings offered by the South West peninsula and nearby areas, making Plymouth a safe and inviting place to live, work and study. Located in the historic maritime city of Plymouth, we embody the spirit of discovery that inspired early voyagers to explore the wider world and we continue to do so as we explore new horizons.

Working together across academic and professional boundaries we place our students at the heart of our University, engaging them fully as partners in their academic learning and personal development. We are proud of the strong economic, social and cultural contributions we make to, and value the connections we have with, individuals and organisations within communities locally, nationally and overseas.

Our talented staff excel in their own areas of scholarly or professional work and really care about what they do and how they do it. Our academic strengths reflect our pioneering approach and we have an increasingly robust research base, particularly in the areas of marine and maritime, robotics, creative arts, and health and sustainability.

Relevance to you

This strategy forms our common guide to focus our activities and drive our success. If you are:

• a student, the strategy emphasises the importance of engaging you as a partner with us to inform your learning, support your personal development, and enhance your overall experience;

• a member of staff, the strategy identifies our priorities and guides you in your work so that you can apply and develop your skills and talents to help deliver our shared ambitions;

• a partner, whether an alumni, friend, donor, business or through collaborative work, the strategy sets out how we will use our distinctive and unique resources, in line with our vision and mission, to both support your endeavours and learn from you.
Our ambitions

Reflecting our enterprising ethos, we have developed four key ambitions that will guide Plymouth University through to 2020.

Ambition: Excellent learning in partnership with students

We aim to have highly satisfied students. We will offer the best experience that we can – preparing our students to succeed in their professional and personal lives – by working with our student body and the Students’ Union to understand their needs, encourage their contributions and learn from their experiences.

Working with our students we aim to:

• ensure that the programmes and courses we offer are of the highest quality and meet the needs of our current and prospective home and international students, employers and professional and statutory bodies;

• deliver inspiring teaching that is informed by research and professional practice;

• help students to develop personally and enhance their employability skills by offering a wide range of extra-curricular experiences including opportunities to take part in research projects, volunteering, placements and internships;

• develop flexible delivery and methods of learning that reflect the requirements of the programme or course and the varied needs of our diverse student body;

• strengthen and extend our engagement with our alumni by working with them as ambassadors and enriching our connections with them so that our current students and broader University can learn from their knowledge and expertise;

• offer a globally relevant and culturally rich experience by growing our international student body and encouraging all students to undertake curricula and extra-curricular activities with an international perspective.
Ambition: World-class research and innovation

We aim to further develop our research standing and impact internationally. We will support the conditions needed for world-class research and innovation to flourish and continue to ensure that our research is built on strong ethical foundations. We will connect disciplines in novel ways, engaging with stakeholders and funders and promoting public engagement and understanding.

Working with our academic staff and broader local, national and international communities we aim to:

• align our research around world-class institutes and centres;
• establish a sustainable financial base for research and innovation activity by enabling our researchers, supported by our professional staff, to secure funding from a wide range of sources;
• build on our current strengths and develop those areas with potential and strategic fit, including expanding clinically relevant research within our Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry;
• nurture student learning and the researchers of tomorrow by excelling in research-informed teaching, providing undergraduate opportunities in research, and supporting our post-graduate and PhD students and early-career researchers;
• pursue appropriate research partnerships and collaborations with other universities and regional, national and international organisations and businesses;
• create conditions and pathways that support the exchange of knowledge and technology with businesses and other organisations, including the commercialisation of research outcomes for public good;
• enhance public engagement in, and understanding of, research and innovation through a range of channels and media, including our Community Research Awards scheme.

Genomic Dots, a DNA Microarray (collection of DNA spots attached to a solid surface), a technique used to measure gene expression.
Ambition: Raising aspirations and driving engagement

We aim to build on and sustain connections with local, national and international partners to enrich our academic experience. We will continue to seek to raise aspiration amongst groups underrepresented in higher education and provide opportunities for our students, staff and the communities we serve through economic development, social inclusion, community outreach and strategic partnerships.

Working with our city, regional, national and international partners we aim to:

• contribute to an economically successful and culturally vibrant city and region through initiatives such as the Social Enterprise University Enterprise Network (SE-UEN), Peninsula Growth Acceleration and Investment Network (GAIN) and Peninsula Arts;
• continue to raise aspirations for higher education study amongst underrepresented groups in accordance with our Access Agreement;
• strengthen pathways of educational opportunity in partnership with our academy schools, local schools, University Technical College, and network of further education partner colleges;
• address health inequalities and outcomes for the City and Region through our Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry, health and allied health professions, working in partnership with the National Health Service and other health and social care organisations;
• foster and promote international opportunities for our students and staff through cross-cultural events on our campuses, exchange programmes, and research and professional connections;
• take the Plymouth University experience across the nation and the world expanding delivery of our programmes and courses, where strategically relevant and sustainable, with our partner colleges, other educational establishments and businesses in the UK and overseas.
Ambition: Achieving resilience, sustainability and effectiveness

We aim to build on our existing position as a leading UK university in sustainability by striving for excellence in financial, environmental and social responsibility across all of our activities.

Working with our students, staff, community and partners we aim to:

- reinforce our financial sustainability in order to invest in our University by significantly strengthening and diversifying our income base through increasing our research base, maximising our efficiency, identifying new business development opportunities, and continuing to develop relationships with alumni and potential donors;
- safeguard our resilience by ensuring finances and other resources are allocated transparently, and are invested and managed in line with our mission;
- maintain our organisational sustainability by ensuring our processes support highly motivated staff who deliver the best possible student experience, teaching, research and professional services;
- differentiate our academic offer by ensuring issues and principles of sustainability permeate and inform our programmes and courses, learning from areas of existing best practice within the University so that students engage positively with sustainability issues affecting their personal and professional lives in a rapidly changing world;
- use our expertise in sustainability research to contribute to defining the problems and creating solutions for the world’s most pressing international, national and local environmental, economic and social challenges;
- support social enterprise businesses by providing start-up advice and assistance, and through increasingly looking to buy the things we need from environmentally, socially and ethically responsible businesses;
- maintain a positive impact on the University, the city and the surrounding region through continuing to reduce our carbon emissions.
Achieving our ambitions

To achieve our ambitions we will support our staff, build on our reputation and brand, enhance our teaching, learning, research and services through technology and use our physical environment to connect communities together.

Achieving: Empowering our people

Our continued success depends upon the talents of our people; our people are ambitious, enthusiastic and focused on delivering excellence in their area of expertise and team within the University. We aim to stimulate a friendly, open and inclusive working and learning environment where people feel valued and respected. We strive to work together to shape the University’s future by empowering people to do what they need to do so that we are more proactive and more efficient.

Supporting our ambitions through our people we aim to:

- sustain a culture of trust, empowerment, transparency and accountability that enables effective leadership and promotes great decision-making at the appropriate level supported by highly effective governance arrangements;
- ensure that the right people are in the right roles at the right time with succession plans in place for all key positions;
- cultivate and sustain a culture of self-leadership and trust where people take responsibility for what they need to do, are clear on what success looks like in their role and understand how best to contribute to the core strategy of the University;
- foster self-development by providing an environment where people have the tools, resources, feedback and leadership they need to enjoy and be successful in their work;
- recognise and reward individual and team contributions through processes such as an effective Performance Development Review procedure and the Vice-Chancellor’s Enterprise Awards.
Achieving: Building on and growing our reputation

We aim to strengthen our reputation and develop our brand by effectively marketing and communicating the activities of the University community and our partners. Internally and externally we will tell the stories of how Plymouth University’s enterprising approach is advancing knowledge and transforming lives through education and research.

Supporting our ambitions through our reputation we aim to:

• ensure that in working to achieve our ambitions through high-quality teaching, excellent research, and societal impact we boost our reputation in our region and across the nation and the world;
• strengthen the use of our ‘with Plymouth University’ brand, including with our key partners, by ensuring that our values are consistently applied and our strategic and distinctive messages are clearly articulated in all marketing and communications;
• enhance student, staff, alumni and partner engagement in the University through simple, clear, consistent and compelling communications;
• promote our activities and celebrate our successes with local, regional, national and international stakeholders through effective use of social media, events and other channels;
• inspire ambassadors and advocates for the University, including our students, staff, alumni, honorary doctorates, donors and friends by ensuring they know what is going on and are given the opportunity to take part in our activities;
• engage with funding bodies, national and local government, professional and statutory bodies, business groups, and key opinion-formers to inform and influence policy developments.
Achieving: Delivering through digital technology

We aim to support and enable delivery of our ambitions and enrich what we do through the appropriate use of digital technology and extend our reach beyond our physical boundaries by becoming an ‘edgeless’ digital university. Our approach is to help our staff and students get the most out of technology and to enhance our services through the appropriate use of technology that will help us to further enhance our teaching, learning, research, innovation and service provision.

Supporting our ambitions with digital technology we aim to:

• help students and staff be confident with their choice and use of technology, including their own devices, in order to thrive in the global digital environment;
• enhance the student experience by embedding digital technologies into our teaching and learning approaches and the supporting communication and administrative frameworks;
• provide a digital environment that is underpinned by modern joined-up systems and user-friendly services which enables collaboration, efficient working and effective management of the University;
• support student and staff innovation through digital technologies that enable the creation and development of new ideas for education and research;
• develop an outstanding online presence that promotes the work and reputation of our University and enables opportunities to enhance collaboration with our partners.
Achieving: Enhancing our learning, living and working environment

We aim to connect our staff, students and broader communities to create a neighbourhood feel through design-led campus environments that are vibrant, accessible, welcoming, safe and environmentally friendly.

Supporting our ambitions with our learning, living and working environment we aim to:

- build new and/or repurpose existing University buildings to be able to guarantee all first-year students accommodation on our campuses;
- ensure the design of our buildings and surroundings connects student and staff communities, fosters interdisciplinary endeavours and promotes cross-team working and networking;
- develop more flexible teaching and learning spaces that enhance the student experience;
- further develop laboratory and other specialist space to grow and sustain world-class research;
- enhance the aesthetic and welcoming appeal of our campuses by supporting green spaces, refreshing outdated buildings and pathways, improving signage and developing entrances into the University;
- work with the city to support regeneration activities aligned with delivery of our mission.
Annex I: Review and reflect, perform and succeed

This strategy is a living guide for our University and as such will be reviewed regularly during the period to 2020, including a formal review in 2016/17, to ensure that we can remain responsive to a fast-moving international higher education environment.

We will monitor and identify the overall performance of our University in implementing this strategy through the following suite of key performance indicators (KPIs):

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Key performance indicator</th>
<th>Excellent learning in partnership with students</th>
<th>World-class research and innovation</th>
<th>Raising aspirations and driving engagement</th>
<th>Achieving resilience, sustainability and effectiveness</th>
<th>Empowering our people</th>
<th>Building on our reputation and growing our brand</th>
<th>Delivering through digital technology</th>
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Dance performance in Plymouth University’s ICC360 Arena, adding a cultural element to Weymouth sailing events of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Taken by Lloyd Russell, University photographer.
Annex II: Translating the strategy through the University

Our Strategy is translated and delivered from high-level ambitions to local level actions throughout the University and with our partners. It is a process that connects strategy to people, offering sufficient freedom and flexibility to capture creativity and sustain enterprising behaviours.

Guided by our values and leadership principles, Plymouth University’s Strategy 2020 will help deliver strong performance and sustainable outcomes that result in reputational gain as we deliver on our mission of Advancing knowledge and transforming lives through education and research:

- Strategy
- Key Performance Indicators
- Action and forecasts
- Individual goals

Risk management

Where are we going – what does success look like?
- Most important strategic change area
- Medium-term horizon

How do we measure progress?
- Indicative measure of strategic delivery
- Through KPIs

How do we get there?
- Action and expected delivery against forecast
- Deadlines and accountabilities

What is my contribution?
My performance goals:
- Delivery
- Behaviour
- Feedback
- Development and training

Ten Tors Orchestra and Penndale Arts Chorale performing Professor Eduardo Miranda’s composition 'Sound to Sea' 2012, taken by Alan Stewart, University photographer
The University is committed to providing information in accessible formats.

For more information email strategy2020@plymouth.ac.uk

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