Advancing Knowledge, Transforming Lives

Our Refreshed Strategy

2016–2020
The University of Plymouth is a remarkable institution with considerable potential.

We are an academic community distinguished by high quality research and teaching and the ambition and achievements of our staff and students.

As we enter a period of considerable change in higher education we must ensure focus and resilience to enhance our reputation and impact.

I would like to thank all staff who have helped to refresh our strategy. Our conversations have been energising and supportive.

This booklet details our refreshed vision and commitments and introduces three core principles:

• Quality
• Institutional Sustainability
• One Team

These principles will underpin everything we do. They will drive us to achieve our ambitions and realise our mission to advance knowledge and transform lives.

This is a simple but powerful strategy. I look forward to working together, as one team, to achieve our shared vision.

Professor Judith Petts, CBE
Our Mission
Advancing knowledge, transforming lives.

Our Vision
The University of Plymouth is renowned for high quality, internationally-leading education, research and innovation.

We make a positive difference to people’s lives.

With a truly global outlook, we are an inclusive and inspiring university community.

Our students are our partners on their journey of discovery.

Our Commitments

We deliver high quality research-led and professionally-relevant teaching. A stimulating student experience ensures challenge, personal development, and employment success.

Our graduates are highly capable, confident and adaptable global citizens. Succeeding in their ambitions, and leaders of the future, they make a difference in society.

Our research embraces real-world challenges to advance and translate knowledge and to drive innovation and enterprise. We prioritise collaboration and interdisciplinary excellence.

Our staff are creative, empowered, and take responsibility. We work with our students as partners and strive for exceptional performance in everything we do.

Our services, estate and infrastructure are an enabling force that supports and enriches our vision and community. They are highly effective and efficient.

We are financially sustainable, enabling long-term investment in our University. We are higher education leaders for sustainability: economic, environmental, and social.
Our Core Principles

These three underlying principles are central to the success of our strategy and will underpin all of our strategic activities:

**Quality:** striving for the highest quality in everything we do

**Institutional Sustainability:** sustainability in our finances, reputation, services, and environment

**One Team:** working, planning for and delivering a shared vision, underpinned by a strong sense of collegiality.

Our Strategy

We will improve our reputation which will enhance our national and international rankings and enable us to outperform our main competitors.

We will monitor key performance indicators on a regular basis and adjust our actions and priorities as necessary to ensure we remain on a successful track.

We will take informed decisions, building our resilience and capacity to adapt to uncertainties in national and international higher education.

A reputation for the highest quality in everything we do, and for delivering an excellent student experience, will ensure demand from the best applicants who will be able to benefit from a University of Plymouth education.

Our research will be recognised for making a difference, ensuring sustained support from funders and our business partners. Our alumni will be proud to engage in the future of the University.
Our Priorities

Our strategic priorities are summarised against our three core principles of Quality, Institutional Sustainability and One Team:

**Quality**
Striving for the highest quality in everything that we do.
- Raising the quality of our student intake
- Improving teaching quality and student experience across all our disciplines
- Increasing opportunities for international study and experience
- Ensuring graduate and professional level employment
- Increasing research volume and quality by growing and sustaining established and emerging peaks of excellence

**Institutional Sustainability**
Sustainability in our finances, reputation, services, and environment.
- Strengthening our finances by sustaining an annual surplus that maintains an ongoing capacity to invest in our people and estate
- Maximising income from tuition fees including through alternative delivery and postgraduate programmes
- Strengthening our reputation by addressing key metrics and improving our external profile
- Enhancing our services to optimise our strategic planning and ensure effectiveness of all our systems
- Enriching our environment through implementation of a new and bold estates strategy

**One Team**
One-team working, planning for and delivering a shared vision, underpinned by a strong sense of collegiality.
- Attracting and retaining high calibre staff
- Increasing the percentage of academic staff delivering high quality teaching and research
- Focusing on maximising performance, empowering individuals to take responsibility
Key Performance Indicators

We will monitor progress against our strategy through a suite of key performance indicators:

**Quality**

1. Entry standards
   - Average total tariff points and sector rank
2. Student experience
   - Sector rank in the National Student Survey – overall satisfaction
   - Sector rank in the continuation of full-time, first degree entrants
   - Sector rank in the % of graduates in positive destinations, from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey
3. Teaching quality
   - % of subjects above average in the National Student Survey – teaching quality, assessment and feedback, and academic support
4. Research performance
   - Value of research grants and contracts awarded (three year rolling average)
   - Sector rank in income from research grants and contracts

**Institutional Sustainability**

5. League table rankings
   - Sector rank in the Guardian, the Complete and the Times University Guides
6. Financial sustainability
   - Surplus as a % of income
   - EBITDA
   - Staff costs as a % of income
7. Student numbers
   - Actual (versus planned) enrolments
   - International students as a % of total student population
8. Infrastructure
   - Total property costs per m² of net internal area

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1 Q2 at time of writing  
2 Q1–12 at time of writing  
3 Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortization
Through the annual business planning process, which looks forward over three years, faculties and professional services will discuss how their activities and plans align to the University’s refreshed vision and goals. Teams will review existing priorities and identify those that support our refreshed strategy. These will become their new priority areas monitored by local performance indicators.

New Risk Registers – Strategic and Operational – will be used to ensure the University remains responsive to the key risks which could divert us from achieving our goals.

We will provide staff with regular updates on our progress through Senate, Senior Leadership Forum, via Vice-Chancellor’s messages, discussions with managers, and the Staff Bulletin.

Staff are encouraged to ask questions or make comments on our strategy by talking to their manager or by emailing strategy@plymouth.ac.uk.

Next Steps
The University of Plymouth will deliver high quality, research-led and professionally-relevant teaching. Our entry tariff will reflect our reputation for quality. We are committed to inspiring and supporting every potential student, regardless of their background, who would be able to benefit from a Plymouth education. As our partners on their journey of discovery, our students will be stimulated and challenged to ensure personal and employment success. They will become highly capable, confident, global citizens; leaders of the future who will make a difference in society.

We will advance and translate knowledge from our internationally-leading research to drive innovation and make a positive difference to economies, societies and the environment. We will be a partner of choice for businesses and governments and collaborate with other leading institutions across the UK and internationally.

We will prioritise the interdisciplinary research that is essential to addressing real-world challenges.

As an inclusive and inspiring community, our staff will be motivated, creative and empowered to work together on our shared vision. They will be confident in, and proud of, their institution and committed to its success.

With a truly global outlook, our reputation for the highest quality in everything we do will be reflected in the National Student Survey and the league tables. We will maintain our leading reputation in the sector for sustainability. We will ensure financial sustainability so that we can invest for the future in our people and our estate – in our University.