



UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

at Cheltenham and Gloucester



Strategic Plan 2009-12

sustaining, pioneering, transforming



Strategic Plan The Innovative University - sustaining, pioneering, transforming

Introduction

The defining characteristic of a university is to be a community of learning. Over many centuries and in different parts of the world, communities of scholars have gathered to pursue intellectual enquiry and to nurture the development of knowledge and skills in the next generation. Perhaps uniquely, universities have been committed to the long view; to the pursuit of goals which may have no obvious value in the short term.

Today, universities continue to stand up against the mere pursuit of the mundane; the prevailing instrumentalism. They are communities devoted to teaching and research. Whilst increasingly they engage with business and the community, working in partnership to promote social and economic development and creating partnerships for sustainability, they remain defined by the fundamental principles of intellectual freedom and enquiry and the pursuit of truth.

The University of Gloucestershire has a unique heritage. The vision of the creators, both Christian and secular, of its founding institutions in the 19th century was centred on the creation of new learning opportunities for the people of Gloucestershire, and on the belief that education – whether technical, professional or artistic – was the key to growth, both for the individual and for society. These early founders caught the mood of the moment, recognising the need for new skills to support the economy; and the importance of education for personal fulfilment and social harmony. Their philanthropy was inspired by a vision of the good society.

Today, the defining vision of the University of Gloucestershire continues to be that of the good society. The church foundation of the university finds expression in its continuing commitment to social engagement and public service, as well as to excellence in teaching and research - a commitment to enriching the lives of the diverse individuals and communities that it serves and creating more positive and sustainable futures. (www.glos.ac.uk/vision)

Mission

Our mission is to pursue the three fundamental principles of the Academy: **Learning** – the creation and dissemination of knowledge; **Community** – the gathering together of teachers and learners to support each other in the pursuit of that knowledge; and **Service** – the pursuit of a humane and whole society.

Our aim is to develop learning communities with a deep commitment to social and environmental justice and to the future of the world; graduates who will recognise the shortcomings of the prevailing utilitarianism; scholars who will provide new insights to help meet the challenges of the future.

Vision

Our vision is to be acknowledged as an exemplar for innovation and sustainability in our education, our research and our partnerships.

We will achieve this vision by building on the fundamental principles of learning, community and service, and by reflecting our agreed values which are built upon our civic and Christian foundations.

Our Values

They are as follows:

NURTURE

We are committed to nurturing the holistic development of our staff and students – their academic, social, emotional, physical, cultural and spiritual well-being.

CREATIVITY

We pursue excellence in the generation of new knowledge and encourage creativity, fun and the exploration of truth.

SUSTAINABILITY

We are dedicated to creating sustainable futures across the communities we serve.

SERVICE

We are responsive to the needs of all stakeholders and strive to enhance all aspects of our services to students, communities and the organisations that we work with.

RESPECT

We value each member of the university and are committed to relationships characterised by respect for the individual.

TRUST

We promote a climate of trust and accountability underpinned by a commitment to open, honest and transparent communications.

These values and commitments inform our four main strategic priorities: **Achieving Inspirational Learning; Transforming Students' Lives; Delivering Research Excellence; and Creating a Sustainable University.**

Cross-cutting themes run through all of these priorities, these include: **nurturing our local and regional communities; engaging with employers; participating in global education; developing an enterprising environment for our students and staff; and promoting sustainability thinking and practice.**



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Strategic Priority 1 Achieving Inspirational Learning

The University of Gloucestershire is known for its innovative, high quality teaching and learning, (www.glos.ac.uk/vision/teachinglearning) building on its 150-year heritage and its success in nurturing and developing a thriving community of National Teaching Fellows. As a community, our approach to learning is informed by research and scholarship and builds on the needs and expectations of students. By 2012 we will have consolidated this reputation through realising our 'Learning for Life' Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, with its five principles of:

- Learner empowerment
- Active engagement
- Learning communities
- Learning for sustainable development
- Learning for equality, diversity and intercultural understanding

We will ensure that these principles frame the teaching and learning experience of staff and students throughout the university. We will:

1. offer learning opportunities of the highest quality to people of all ages and at all stages of their educational journey that meet their needs in terms of what, where, how and when they wish to study
2. enable our students to become sustainability-literate and, therefore, able to become socially responsible and ethically sensitive engaged citizens
3. promote internationalisation through curriculum design and through modes of delivery that encourage participation by students from a range of countries worldwide
4. establish distinctive University of Gloucestershire graduate attributes in respect of employability skills, enterprise, sustainability and capacity to change and adapt
5. continue to develop our innovation in teaching and learning founded on an enquiry-based approach and take advantage of the opportunities provided by e-learning to invest in new learning technologies
6. ensure that all students have the opportunity to engage with the world of employment through work-experience, placement or commercial project
7. develop graduates who will have a lifelong loyalty to the University of Gloucestershire
8. build on and refresh the expertise of all staff in order to support the best possible student learning experience.

Strategic Priority 2 Transforming Students' Lives

The university, located in an exceptionally attractive setting, is relatively small and has a strong tradition of staff support for students (www.glos.ac.uk/living). The university is a friendly and supportive community where the student experience involves more than simply gaining a degree. As increasing numbers enter higher education from a wider range of backgrounds the university is committed to working with students to help them develop their full potential and to instil a passion for lifelong learning.

A key priority for the university is to promote the development of the full range of individuals' talents and skills - a range which extends far beyond the course or research project. Attractive campuses with a strong sense of identity and a vibrant social life, coupled with helpful and supportive staff, create an excellent student experience.

To ensure that this experience is available to all students, we will:

1. provide accessible, appropriate and effective academic and pastoral support and guidance for all students
2. develop opportunities for students to secure paid employment, either within the university or in the local economy
3. invest further in facilities for sport, the arts and the chaplaincy to contribute to a strong sense of community and collective identity across the university
4. engage students locally through volunteering schemes, mentoring activities, work placements, cultural, heritage and sports and faith-based projects
5. offer opportunities to all students to study issues of global importance such as environment, sustainability, global development and modern foreign languages alongside their main subject programme
6. create university 'halls' to which all students, whether residential or non-residential, will belong. Each hall will have a Warden who will be responsible for helping students develop and sustain an ethos and identity for their own community
7. enable students to undertake part of their academic programme at an overseas partner university
8. invest in a thriving and active Alumni Association to build on the attachment of former students to their university.



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Strategic Priority 3 Delivering Research Excellence

The generation of new knowledge and ways of knowing is fundamental to the concept of a university. We will continue to develop the university's research culture through the strategic pursuit of excellence across the spectrum of our research activities. Our goal is to ensure that the university achieves a position in the top quartile of post-1992 universities in the Research Excellence Framework (www.glos.ac.uk/research).

Through the development of professional relationships with key business sectors and through educational partnerships, the university will pursue its enterprise strategy to deliver sustainable economic success for Gloucestershire.

In line with our research and knowledge transfer strategy, which is designed to achieve these goals, we will:

1. sustain a small number of nationally-known, interdisciplinary research institutes, including the International Institute for Research in Sustainability, for which we are nationally and internationally recognised
2. promote the creation of innovative research centres and groups pursuing topics of strategic importance to Gloucestershire and the surrounding region (www.glos.ac.uk/research/Pages/researchcentres.aspx)
3. establish a sustainable research culture and a framework of expectations which is supported by the necessary mechanisms for income generation
4. provide the research leadership and support that will enable those academic staff that so wish to develop their research skills
5. pursue mutually beneficial alliances and collaborations internally as well as through strategic research partnerships
6. strengthen our flourishing and supportive research communities, building research student numbers in-house and in partnership
7. develop innovative, commercially valuable knowledge exchange services through the pursuit of sustainable business partnerships
8. develop our capacity to excel in a wide range of third stream activities, including: Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, consultancy and incubation Centres. (www.glos.ac.uk/businessandpartnerships)

Strategic Priority 4 Creating a Sustainable University

The university will review all its operations and develop a culture and attitude towards finance, human resources, ICT and estates that place them at the centre of decision making. Such a transformational change, underpinned by a sophisticated information planning system, will provide the basis for achieving our strategic vision, and ensure the future health and viability of the university (www.glos.ac.uk/vision/sustainability).

The pace of delivery of our strategic vision is entirely dependent on ensuring that income increases at a greater level than costs and that costs are controlled and deliver value for money.

Central to achieving these changes will be our success at recruiting excellent people who are competent, committed, creative and capable contributing their expertise in managing and responding positively to change. We will:

1. strengthen the financial operating position of the university and ensure that resources are available for recurrent, capital and investment purposes, as and when required.
2. develop a robust approach to risk management, applying a range of well-developed Key Performance Indicators across all aspects of our business
3. model sustainability through reducing our carbon footprint
4. achieve sector benchmarks for space utilisation underpinned by a systematic programme of planned maintenance activities
5. launch a range of profitable activities and services that ensure our estate is contributing to the success of the university on a year-round basis
6. promote appropriate leadership styles that recognise both the rights of the individual and the needs of the organisation
7. develop people systems and practices that recognise individual contributions from an accountable, responsible workforce
8. promote sustainability and carbon reduction activities as a way of reducing operational and institutional costs
9. ensure that any new initiatives, at all levels, are subject to a rigorous 'business case' approach before commitments are agreed
10. create a culture of staff 'ownership' of the operational implications of the strategic vision of the university.



