

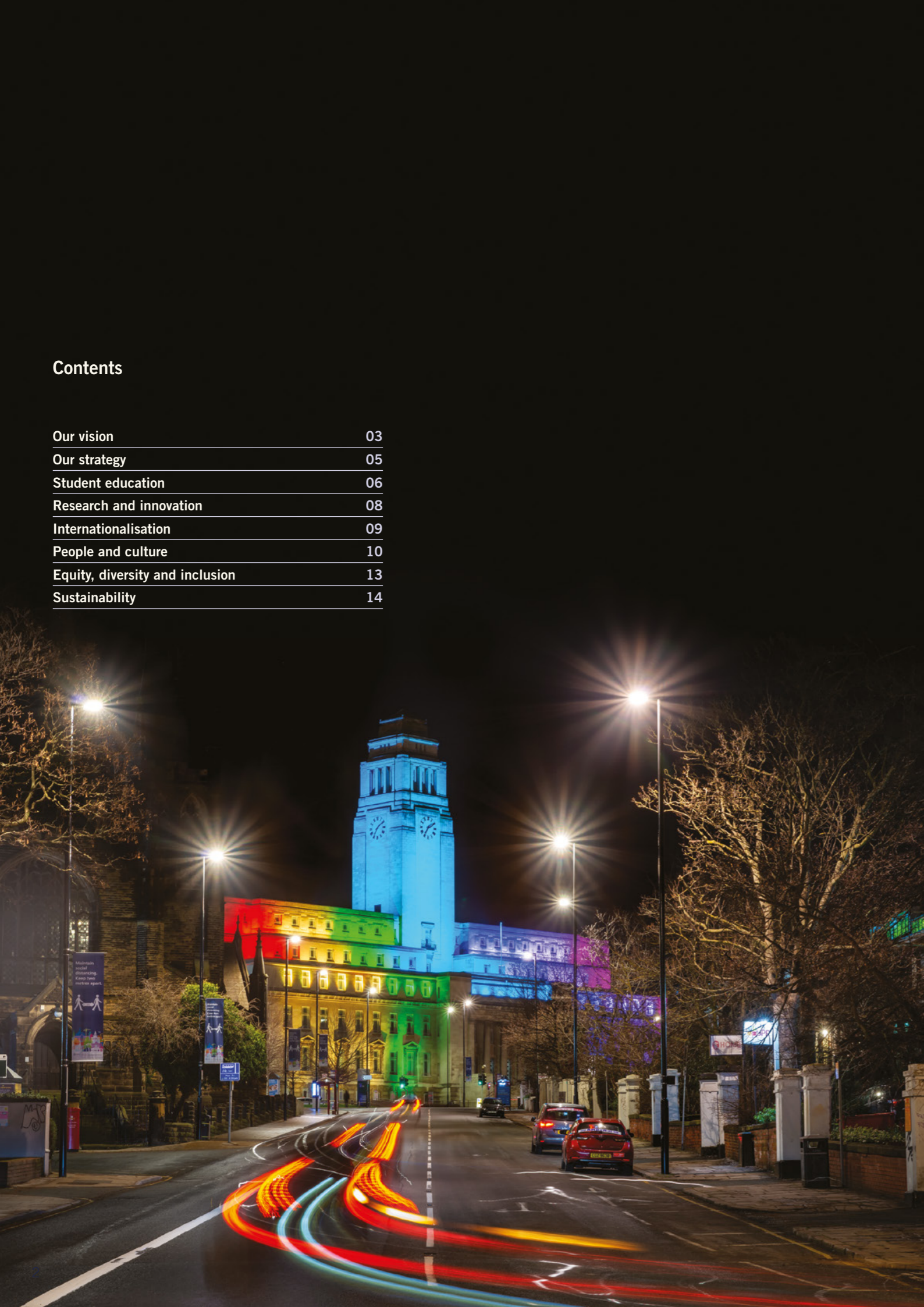
CHANGING THE WORLD, FOR THE GOOD OF ALL

Faculty of Social Sciences

Vision and Strategy 2023-2030



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



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Our vision

Our vision is to change the world for the better and for the good of all.

As a social science community, driven by the [University of Leeds Strategy 2020-2030: Universal Values, Global Change](#), we have set ourselves the goal of working collaboratively to achieve societal impact and drive social change.

Uniting people across our four schools – School of Education; School of Law; School of Politics and International Studies; School of Sociology and Social Policy – we work together with the aim of addressing major societal challenges and making a positive difference to people's lives.

Through our research and innovation, our student education, and our engagement with communities, we foreground the importance of understanding society as a foundation for tackling inequalities, addressing injustices, and creating a better future for everyone.

Together, and in collaboration with our colleagues across the University, we are committed to ensuring

that the social sciences are central to and a catalyst for education and research that produce tangible and positive societal transformations.

Our people are at the heart of what we do and, together, we support each other to achieve excellence. We strive for a collaborative and inclusive environment in which everyone, staff and students, can thrive and achieve their full potential.

Our commitment to financial sustainability underpins our ability to deliver our vision. By combining robust financial management with a tactical and responsive approach to new opportunities, we strive to maximise our performance, thereby ensuring our long-term academic and financial sustainability.

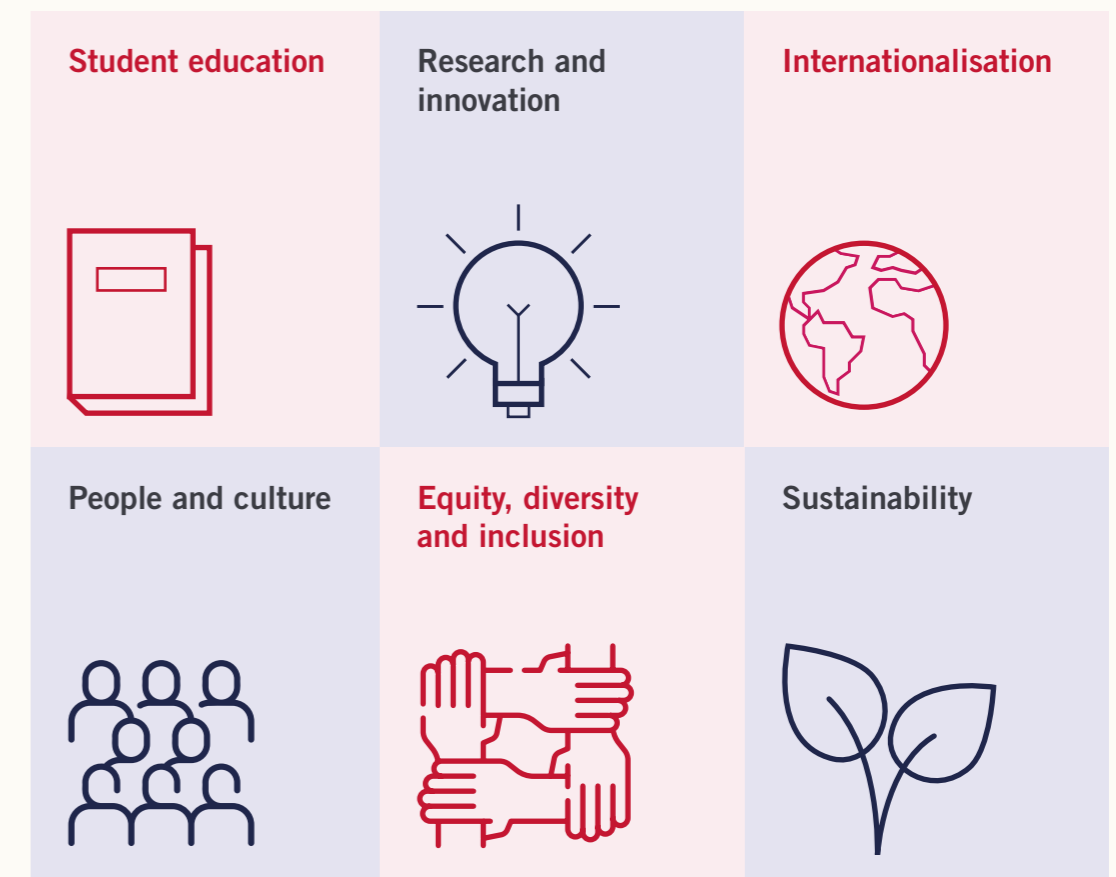
In all that we do we are guided by our University Values of [collaboration, compassion, inclusivity, and integrity](#).





Our strategy

Our strategy is focused on **six** interrelated areas of our work:



Each area of our work is underpinned by the three over-arching elements of the University Strategy 2020-30: community, culture and impact.



Student education

To deliver the University's Student Education Strategy 2020-30 and Digital Transformation Strategy 2020-30, we aspire to deliver transformative, student-centred research-based education, ensuring that all students can thrive and become part of a life-long engaged community of graduates that make a positive impact in the world.

Aims and objectives:

1

Provide a research-based educational experience for students from diverse backgrounds, to develop the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. We will:

- Sustain and enhance our commitment to widening participation across all of our programmes, delivering the Access and Student Success Strategy.
- Attract, retain and support students from all backgrounds and groups, with a focus on evidence-based interventions that support the achievement of challenging targets for under-represented groups.
- Embed evidence-based, active and inclusive approaches to learning and assessment across the Faculty.

2

Enhance and improve every aspect of the student experience. We will:

- Create a positive and inclusive culture, helping all students and staff to feel and promote a sense of belonging as valued members of our community.
- Internationalise the student experience for all students.
- Ensure all students have access to relevant academic and pastoral support.

3

Transform our curricula by placing students and their success at its heart. We will:

- Ensure our students are equipped with knowledge, skills and attributes aligned with their career aspirations and the needs of society and employers.
- Streamline our portfolio, adopt a consistent programme structure that facilitates student choice and different ways of learning, and ensure the currency of our programmes is in line with research strengths.
- Support students to engage with lifelong learning, to explore study and career opportunities in the Leeds City Region, and increase civic engagement within our curricula.

4

Provide an outstanding education, underpinned and enhanced by sector-leading digital resources, teaching methods and technologies. We will:

- Enhance and embed the use of digital technology across our curricula to ensure a high-quality student experience and that our students are equipped with the digital skills needed to succeed in their studies and beyond.
- Expand our portfolio of accessible online education for lifelong learning, collaborating with global partners, including a high-quality suite of social science fully online programmes and relevant micro/CPD courses.

5

Support our students to be professionally literate by providing a research-based curriculum experience which enables our graduates to be ready to apply their discipline knowledge and skills in a range of contexts, understand their impact upon the communities within which they will live and work, and be able to confidently plan for their future development needs. We will:

- Ensure that all students understand and can articulate the skills value of their taught programme experience.
- Deliver programmes that include appropriate experiential learning opportunities and authentic assessment.
- Ensure that all students experience the opportunity to self-assess and plan for their own professional and academic development.
- Provide taught programmes that ensure that students are supported and signposted in how they can further develop beyond their curriculum experience.
- Deliver distinctive and research-based programmes, applied to societal issues that result in professionally literate graduates who are able to contribute to society through the transferable nature of their educational experience.





Research and innovation

To deliver the University's [Research and Innovation Strategy 2020-30](#), we aspire to conduct world-leading social science research that is conceptually rich, theoretically informed and empirically rigorous, and which addresses major societal challenges at local, national and global scales, thereby advancing academic knowledge, informing teaching and scholarship and having a positive impact on people's lives.

Aims and objectives:

1

Support our researchers throughout their careers to achieve the highest quality research and to maximise the impact of that research. We will:

- a. Support the production of high-quality research outputs appropriate to fields of study and career stages.
- b. Encourage and support the translation of research into impact and knowledge exchange.
- c. Enable opportunities for research grant capture to underpin new programmes of research.

2

Sustain a culture and environment that underpins high-quality, challenge-led research, founded on our disciplinary research strengths. We will:

- a. Embed our [University Values](#) across all aspects of research and innovation.
- b. Recognise and value diverse strengths and contributions, including those who enable and support research activity.
- c. Support Early Career Researchers to realise their full potential and Mid Career Researchers to become research leaders.
- d. Ensure our research centres are optimally organised to fully support and facilitate all aspects of our research activities.

3

Promote interdisciplinary and collaborative research. We will:

- a. Promote wide and deep engagement with the University's interdisciplinary platforms, including the [Leeds Social Sciences Institute](#), the [Horizons Institute](#), and the Futures Institutes.
- b. Capitalise on cross-faculty and cross-school research opportunities, capacities and synergies.
- c. Scale up cross-sector collaborative research and partnerships.
- d. Showcase our core interdisciplinary themes, collaborative opportunities and co-production models of research.

4

Attract and support high-quality postgraduate researchers (PGRs). We will:

- a. Maximise the number of PGRs in our areas of research expertise.
- b. Seek to attract increased external funding to support a wider and more diverse body of PGRs.
- c. Provide support to PGRs for their academic and professional development, inclusive of placements and secondments with collaborative partners.
- d. Sustain high-quality doctoral-level training to support skills development that underpin the career aspirations of our PGRs.



Internationalisation

To deliver the University's [International Strategy 2020-30](#), we aspire to sustain and further develop a global community of staff and students from diverse geographies and cultures. Through our student education and research collaborations we seek to enhance our international reputation for high-quality and pioneering academic work.

Aims and objectives:

1

Build a sustainable cohort of diverse international and UK students on campus and via digital delivery of online programmes. We will:

- a. Diversify and globalise student recruitment, on campus and online.
- b. Maximise and diversify recruitment of undergraduate international students in specific subject areas.
- c. Provide scholarship support to promote geo-diversity in our student cohort.
- d. Explore the provision of cost-of-living bursaries for students from the Global South, using the network of education partnerships to identify and nominate potential recipients in an open and transparent way.
- e. Develop and run a biennial partner conference, bringing key influencers and stakeholders to Leeds to showcase our strengths.

2

Recruit, support and retain talented staff from diverse geographies, socio-economic backgrounds and cultures. We will:

- a. Work together to align staff recruitment processes with recruitment cycles in different jurisdictions.
- b. Promote academic exchanges and enhance the experience of international visitors to Leeds, to encourage impactful interactions between staff.

3

Deliver an inclusive, intercultural and international student experience. We will:

- a. Ensure that our curricula are globally informed, internationally relevant and inclusive.

- b. Engage with [Curriculum Redefined](#) to work towards better integration of UK and international students, socially, culturally and intellectually in our global community.
- c. Support teaching staff in proactively responding to linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom and work closely with the [Language Centre](#) in promoting academic literacy and intercultural competence and communication.
- d. Develop and promote a range of inclusive global study and flexible mobility options, both on campus and online.
- e. Use evidence-based practice to address any attainment gaps for international students, aligned to the [Access and Student Success Strategy](#)
- f. Grow educational collaborations to deliver global classrooms.
- g. Enhance work with relevant internal partners (including the [Careers Centre](#)) to better understand the global graduate employment market and to support students in planning for a global career.

4

Develop and sustain a range of international research partnerships. We will:

- a. Initiate and sustain centre-to-centre partnerships with research intensive universities to drive research excellence and maximise impact.
- b. Support and mentor staff to develop their careers through productive and impactful international collaborations and networking.
- c. Encourage and support international co-authorship of high-quality research outputs.
- d. Enable opportunities for international research grant capture.



People and culture

People play a vital part in the success of the Faculty and schools. Together we support each other to achieve excellence and deliver our vision and strategy in a collaborative and inclusive environment. Our vision is for the Faculty to be a diverse community where everyone, staff and students, can thrive and achieve their full potential. Human Resources will support the Faculty and schools by providing a professional, agile and high-quality service, driven by our [University Values](#) and underpinned by local knowledge and partnership working.

Aims and objectives:

1

Deliver optimal organisational shape and ways of working. We will:

- Develop innovative workforce solutions.
- Implement and embed new organisational structures, and continuous improvement and change programmes.
- Ensure fair and secure employment practices for all through robust strategic workforce planning.
- Support and enable staff to adapt to agile and hybrid ways of working.
- Propagate a community where academic and professional services staff work in partnership.

2

Grow our diverse and inclusive community (see also [Equity, diversity and inclusion section](#)). We will:

- Ensure equity, diversity and inclusion are central to and embedded in all policies, processes and working practices.
- Address intersectional inequalities in career development.
- Improve staff diversity, particularly among those in leadership roles.
- Review how we attract and recruit staff to encourage increased diversity.

3

Enable people to be their best by recognising and celebrating inspiring performance and behaviours. We will:

- Embed our [University Values](#) in employment practices, recruitment, reward and recognition, promotions, staff development, and communications.
- Support growth and maximisation of potential by implementing a transparent succession planning and development pathways strategy.
- Provide bespoke support for staff development, including review and mentoring, and peer support.
- Work in partnership with [OD&PL](#) to provide support for staff to enable the acquisition of skills needed for future development.
- Ensure staff with Teaching and Scholarship profiles are appropriately recognised and rewarded.
- Improve and strengthen the quality of Annual Academic Meetings/Staff Review and Development processes, including discussions relating to research/scholarship expectations.
- Support structured staff reviews which consider workload planning, pressure points and appropriate development linked to career pathways.
- Embed new employment procedures and the [Code of Conduct – Professional Behaviour and Relationships](#).
- In partnership with [OD&PL](#), support the enhancement of leadership capacity and capability, with a clear focus on succession planning and providing bespoke support and development.

4

Promote health and wellbeing. We will:

- In partnership with [Wellbeing, Safety & Health](#) and [OD&PL](#), promote staff wellbeing through interventions such as managing mental health and stress in the workplace.
- Support staff to proactively manage their own health and wellbeing and enable them to support others to access appropriate support.
- Ensure staff have sustainable workloads and that appropriate working practices/ways of working are in place.





Equity, diversity and inclusion

To deliver the University's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, we are committed to establishing evidence-based and value-driven equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) practices in all areas of our work. We aspire to achieve tangible, sustainable change to support a safe, respectful working and learning environment that cultivates belonging, values diversity, actively resists discrimination and under-representation, and enables staff and students to thrive both individually and collectively.

Aims and objectives:

1

Mainstream EDI in everything we do. We will:

- Incorporate EDI into all areas of our work, including identifying pathways for implementation.
- Establish EDI as a collective responsibility.
- Equip staff and students with the knowledge, skills and opportunities necessary to incorporate EDI into their everyday practices.

2

Ensure equitable access to career development opportunities (see also People and culture section). We will:

- Monitor and address intersectional inequalities in career development.
- Improve staff diversity at all grades.
- Support career development through mentoring and annual review processes.

3

Enhance diversity at all levels of our student cohort. We will:

- Develop and strengthen our existing PGR scholarship scheme for Black, Asian and ethnic minority students.
- Develop packages of support to enhance equality of opportunities for under-represented groups.
- Address disparities in student progression and awards.

4

Enhance inclusion and belonging for staff and students. We will:

- Ensure accessibility of our buildings and classrooms.
- Enhance inclusion through the strategic and creative use of digital, online and other working practices.
- Develop inclusive digital and in-person communication practices.
- Respond positively and visibly to experiences of inequality raised by staff and students.
- Place the concerns and interests of marginalised groups at the heart of our work as intersecting rather than isolated issues.

5

Become sector leaders on professional conduct. We will:

- Build trust among staff and students that unprofessional conduct is taken seriously and addressed promptly.
- Ensure full staff participation in mandatory EDI/professional conduct training, including PGRs.
- Ensure that students are aware of the boundaries of professional behaviours.
- Ensure professional behaviour is embedded across all aspects of our work.



Sustainability

The climate crisis is the most significant challenge the world faces. The social sciences have a fundamental place in articulating the impact climate change will have on all societies. To realise the University's [Climate Plan](#) and [Pathway to Net Zero](#) ambitions, sustainability will be embedded throughout all faculty activity and placed at the forefront of our decision-making. Through student education and research, guided by the [UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), we will produce graduates and researchers equipped with the knowledge to face current and future global challenges and make a positive environmental impact.

Aims and objectives:

- 1** **Increase our knowledge of sustainability and its impact across the Faculty in order to deliver our commitment to net zero. We will:**
 - a. Ensure sustainability is at the forefront of faculty decision making.
 - b. Roll out carbon literacy training to all staff and students.

- 2** **Ensure students are provided with the opportunity to develop their knowledge in sustainability. We will:**
 - a. Embed the University's sustainability principles across all of our taught curricula.
 - b. Develop a deep understanding of the SDGs among all our staff and support academic staff in embedding these into their modules, programmes and research planning.
 - c. Work with the University to remove barriers to interdisciplinarity and the introduction of interdisciplinary programmes with a focus on climate change education.

- 3** **Work with appropriate university services to review and improve our physical infrastructure to meet our sustainability aspirations.**
 - a. Undertake the University's [Blueprint programme](#) to assess our sustainability impacts.

- 4** **Support the University's Net Zero plans¹ to ensure our energy use and approach to business travel and commuting is carbon neutral. We will:**
 - a. Work with colleagues across the University and, using agreed methods, understand and quantify our energy use and the impact of our business-related travel and commuting.
 - b. Propagate sustained behavioural change to reduce energy usage through active engagement with our community.
 - c. Embed the University's business-related travel policy.
 - d. Utilise developments from the University's [Digital Transformation Strategy 2020-30](#) and technological change to provide alternatives to business travel.
 - e. Investigate mechanisms to reduce carbon emissions related to travel as a priority, and explore the use of offsetting (as guided by [COP26 Universities Network Offsetting briefing](#)) where emissions are unavoidable.

¹ For Net Zero, the University's core carbon footprint is defined as direct and indirect emissions from energy generation, business travel and commuting. Emissions related to student travel will form part of Net Zero Plus and are not yet in scope.



