



Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025



Introduction from the Principal and Vice-Chancellor



As we look to the future, the over-riding issue will be the way we, and indeed society as a whole, recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. My colleagues at QMU have been simply outstanding in enabling our students to complete their studies in the 2019/20 academic year and in preparing our University to welcome new and returning students in the autumn.

Looking further ahead, we will need to be creative, agile and resilient as well as holding true to our values. It will, without doubt, be a challenging time but there will also be opportunities. And we must not lose sight of other important issues such as accelerating technological change and innovation; an increasing focus on sustainability; and social and demographic change.

Through our teaching and research, we will address these issues, including playing our part in responding to the impact of the pandemic. We will enable people to heal, nurture, care and communicate. We will inspire them to build and rebuild businesses, find solutions to real life issues and to support communities. We will foster creativity and artistic expression, building social capital in the process.

Our programmes cover healthcare; social sciences; creative arts; business, management and enterprise; and primary and secondary teaching. Trained professionals in many of these areas played key roles in tackling the pandemic and all of them will be vital to the global recovery. Our graduates and staff can already be found in influential roles across the world, influencing policy and enhancing society, culture and the economy. In short, we make a real difference in the world in keeping with our values.

[!\[\]\(a870788d6ed9b8fd294b7654a8c8526b_img.jpg\) Read our student and graduate stories](#)

We are a distinctive university because of our innovative, person-centred approach to learning and because of our unique academic portfolio. We recognise that the nature of learning itself is changing and this will be influenced further by adaptations as a consequence of the unprecedented situation in 2020. We are committed to developing the way we teach and research to be flexible and responsive both to the needs of our students and the communities we serve. Our approach to blended learning is predicated on quality and effectiveness.

[!\[\]\(3211b5d1d968fc1665909b34f9f16010_img.jpg\) About the university](#)

[!\[\]\(6059a5aa8b4ca7bb793408023d6c6e42_img.jpg\) View facts and figures about us](#)

We are pioneers in inclusiveness and we embrace people from all backgrounds. In 1875, the institution that became Queen Margaret University provided education for working class women at a time when society made that challenging. Society, and the institution, have evolved significantly but this original commitment to making education open to all still inspires us.

We have the significant advantage of being an Edinburgh university. Edinburgh is one of the world's great cities, renowned as a place of culture, learning and natural beauty. Our unique situation allows us to take advantage of all the opportunities that this offers whilst working within, and contributing to, our local community.

Our Strategic Plan 2020-2025 sets out how we will respond positively to, and influence the needs of, society and local communities, building on our key strengths, adapting to overcome obstacles and creating new areas of success. At the heart of this plan is a great student experience and inspiring staff.

Sir Paul Grice FRSE FAcSS

Our purpose

We see our purpose as helping to create a better society through education, research and innovation, and by providing a supportive and creative learning environment in which students and staff thrive.

In seeking to fulfil this purpose, we are clear and realistic about our strengths, focused on strategic goals, persistent in pursuing opportunities and overcoming barriers, and guided by our values.





Our values

We are a university that is modern in our outlook and facilities but with a maturity built on a long history of serving the community, both locally and globally, and enhancing its wellbeing. We work in a transparent and inclusive manner and hold to core values in everything we do.

We value **environmental sustainability:** We recognise the severe threats to our environment and will be a sector leader in response. Our modern campus is a great asset in this work.

We value the **individual and encourage collective support:** Each member of staff and each student has their own journey to make and their own contribution to give. Queen Margaret University provides the supportive environment to facilitate this.

We value **social justice:** In fact, it underpins our world view. We embrace equality, diversity, inclusion, respect, and supporting our communities. Opportunities and access are open to all and on a fair basis.

We value **excellence:** This is embedded in our research, teaching and learning, knowledge exchange and the services we provide. It will be exemplified in the experience of our students, staff and partners.

We value **ambition:** We inspire our students and staff to achieve the best that they can. We pursue opportunities, often in partnership and collaboration with others, to transform and influence society for the better and enhance our visibility within the higher education sector and the wider economy.

We value **intellectual curiosity and the journey of discovery:** We design our teaching and research to facilitate this.



Strategic Goals

To fulfil our purpose we have developed a set of strategic goals, with associated outputs, that are underpinned by our values.

These goals are explored in more detail throughout this plan and the achievement of the associated outcomes will be supported by a separate, detailed delivery plan.

**SEEK OUT
PARTNERSHIP AND
COLLABORATION**

**INVEST IN THE LONG
TERM FUTURE OF
THE UNIVERSITY**

**PROVIDE DISTINCTIVE,
ACCESSIBLE, HIGH
QUALITY EDUCATION**

**DELIVER
TRANSFORMATIVE
RESEARCH AND
INNOVATION**

**EMBED
SUSTAINABILITY
ACROSS OUR
PORTFOLIO AND
PRACTICES**

PROVIDE DISTINCTIVE, ACCESSIBLE, HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION

Attractive, Relevant and Market Responsive Academic Portfolio

Become the university of choice for students in our key markets and core academic disciplines. Provide our graduates with relevant and future focused knowledge, skills and professional qualifications, enabling them to make a real difference around the world through a sustained and meaningful contribution to society. Taking advantage of the necessary adaptations to learning in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, ensure we have the infrastructure in place to offer a flexible choice in methods of learning that are appropriate to students' circumstances and make the best use of emerging technologies

Outcomes:

- A portfolio that encourages people to study with us and partners to work with us.
- An increase in our overall student population, optimising the balance of different student cohorts.
- An increase in the percentage of students gaining work experience as part of their programme.
- An increase in our graduate employment measure.



[Our Academic Portfolio](#)



[See the Deputy First Minister talk about the social value of a new addition to our course provision](#)

[Our distinctive course offering](#)

[Hear what our students and graduates have to say about QMU](#)

Accessible and Inclusive Lifelong Learning

Enhance further access for students from under-represented groups, designing and implementing new approaches to flexibility in the learner journey in order to offer each student a journey that is appropriate to their needs.

Outcomes:

- An increase in the number of students from under-represented groups.
- An increase the number of students articulating into the later years of our programmes from college.
- A high retention rate of students across all programmes.



A Wellbeing University

Maintain and develop our distinct, people centred environment to ensure that students feel safe and supported in their studies by staff who feel confident, motivated and inspired. Provide a learning environment adapted to the post Covid-19 world, that is attractive to work in and designed to support a wide variety of learning styles. Promote a culture of respect and resilience in students and staff across the University

Outcomes:

- An increase in student satisfaction with the campus, its facilities and the learning environment.
- An increase in staff satisfaction with their job and development opportunities.
- Further facilities on the University estate that are attractive to students, staff and the wider community.



DELIVER TRANSFORMATIVE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Internationally Recognised Research

Build on our strengths in applied research to support the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of our global society through interdisciplinary work, collaboration and excellence. Focus our activity and investment in research and knowledge exchange on areas of potential growth, demonstrable strength, and greatest likely benefit to society. Become a leader in addressing the priority challenge areas of healthy ageing, food production, audience of the future and next generation services. Contribute to relevant areas of research resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Outcomes:

- An optimised percentage of research active staff creating a critical mass with the ability to drive research strategy.
- An increase in the overall quality profile of research publications.
- An increase in externally secured research income.
- A clearly defined research collaboration strategy that facilitates and supports all levels of partnership working.



Find out more about our research and knowledge exchange work



Learn about how our work in speech is transforming lives

Innovation

Build on our existing strengths in new product development in food and drink, creative enterprise, social innovation and female entrepreneurship. Further embed enterprise and innovation across the academic portfolio and staff culture. Being cognisant of the disruption resulting from Covid-19, continue to be an anchor institution in the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal, providing strategic leadership, connectivity and coherence in innovation strategically integrated into the regional growth agenda.

Outcomes:

- An increase in the number, range and survival rates of graduate start-up companies.
- An increase in the number of female staff and student entrepreneurs.
- An increase in income from innovation activity.
- City Deal funding secured and construction of an Innovation Hub well under way.
- New industry-facing programmes.
- A new pipeline of industry facing collaborative PhDs.
- An increase in demand led innovation activity across the academic portfolio.

SEEK OUT PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Be the partner of choice for academic, government and other organisations around the world in our areas of expertise contributing to the global recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. Facilitate this through the development of an Innovation Hub and by ensuring that we are attractive to potential partners, both in our areas of expertise and in our transparent and straightforward approach to partnership development.

Outcomes:

- A clearly visible and highly promoted cross-university approach to partnership working.
- An increase in the number of research partnerships.
- An increase in the quality and scale of transnational education partnerships.
- A key university in partnering with Government and delivering on its priorities.
- Small and medium enterprise Innovation Hub partners ready to take up residency


INVEST IN THE LONG TERM FUTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY

Recognising the significant financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, develop a financial recovery plan to secure our long term future as a thriving university with the financial resources to invest in learning and teaching, research and innovation, and the services and infrastructure that support these endeavours. Ensure that the right funding is in the right place to support identified priorities.

Outcomes:

- A managed recovery from the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Financial surplus achieved and projected to be maintained in the long term.
- An increase in investment in staffing and infrastructure.
- A clear set of investment priorities.



 [Find out more about some of our partnerships](#)
[Discover how City Deal funding and partnership is supporting innovation around the campus](#)

EMBED SUSTAINABILITY ACROSS OUR PORTFOLIO AND PRACTICES

Promote and incorporate sustainable practices into all of our activities in order to be at the forefront of sustainability and provide an exemplar for other organisations. Take advantage of the learning from the Covid-19 pandemic regarding environmental sustainability. Recognise this environmental priority but ensure that the social and economic aspects of sustainability are also given prominence.

Outcomes:

- A reduction in CO₂ emissions and carbon footprint from activities both in the physical operation of the University campus and the working practices of staff and students.
- Academic programmes with sustainability elements embedded.
- Graduates entering society with a rounded understanding of the sustainability challenges facing the world and the tools to contribute to solutions.



Our commitment to sustainability

Key enablers

In order to deliver our plan we must have the right support in place, in particular through:

Our People:

We are a people centred university which invests in staff and student development and in effective systems and processes to support them.

Good Leadership:

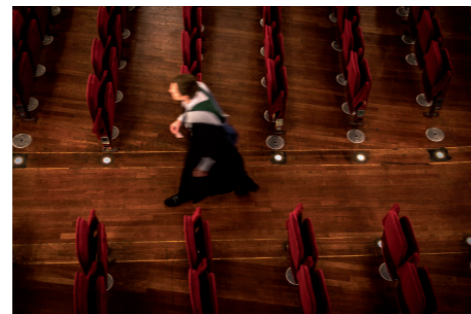
We aim to lead the University with clarity, ambition and integrity.

Our Infrastructure:

We invest to improve and enhance our estate and support systems so that we provide a stimulating, safe and supportive environment in which to study and work.

Our partners:

We draw on the resources and expertise of our external partners to enhance our learning and teaching, and research and innovation, for mutual benefit.



Our targets

By

2025

We will be the top modern university in Scotland for graduate employment.

We will be a sector leader in access for students from under-represented groups.

We will be top modern university in Scotland for student satisfaction.

We will be amongst the top in the UK for staff recommending their university as a good place to work.

We will have increased our international research quality profile.

We will have secured our position as a leading modern university in Scotland for research and innovation.

We will be delivering a year-on-year surplus allowing for significant investment.

Our partnerships (including research and transnational education) **will** become an increasingly significant area of our business, enhancing our domestic and global footprint.

We will have a reduced carbon footprint and be one of the best performing universities in the UK on this measure.

More than ever before, as we look forward from 2020, we recognise the power of technology to drive excellence and innovation across the University and to enable our ambition to reach out to communities locally and globally. We are committed to investing in technological development to support our strategic goals.

 [Find out more about the QMU community through their blogs](#)

 [Learn about our management team](#)



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