Thank you for taking the time to read the University of Bedfordshire Strategic Plan for 2017-20.

I am proud to lead this university – a university that embraces diversity, that puts students first, and that takes seriously our responsibility to the communities we serve in our region, in the UK’s major cities and across the globe. Through our work to improve access to higher education and through our world-leading research and scholarship, we are truly transforming lives.

During the next three years the UK university sector will face turbulence, especially the consequences of our departure from the European Union. Our strategic plan sets out how we will ensure our long-term sustainability while holding firm to our core mission and values.

Whether you are a member of staff, a student or a friend of the University of Bedfordshire, I look forward to working with you over the next three years to achieve our vision.

Bill Rammell
Vice Chancellor
THE CURRICULUM

WE WILL:

• Embed a collaborative approach to the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum, involving academics, students, employers and external experts
• Ground our curriculum in active inquiry and the pedagogy of exploration and discovery, developing creative problem-solving capabilities in our students
• Develop further our use of real-life settings to develop skills, attitudes and capabilities that enable students to thrive and succeed in the workplace
• Strengthen the link between teaching and research and professional practice through explicit articulation of the research basis for the curriculum in courses and units and through engaging employers, research supervisors and students in research and professional practice opportunities
• Embed active engagement with public policy and community challenges in and around the curriculum to enable students to learn how to apply their knowledge and have a positive impact in their communities

MEASURE: Achieve a
TOP QUARTILE POSITION
for key student learning experience indicators in the National Student Survey (teaching quality, academic support, assessment and feedback, overall satisfaction)

MEASURE: 70% of undergraduate students engage with the diagnostic exercises and e-portfolio, evidencing PARTICIPATION in at least one co- or extra-curricular activity, with comparable rates of engagement among international, mature, Black and minority ethnic students and students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds (POLAR 1&2)

MEASURE: 50% student turnout in SU elections, 30% in local elections and 60% in national elections

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

WE WILL:

• Ensure all new undergraduates undertake a series of diagnostic exercises to improve understanding of their personal strengths and the opportunities that can help them to develop
• Support our students to plan and reflect on their development through the adoption of an e-portfolio system incorporating triggers to enable interventions to support less-engaged students
• Further develop and diversify the co- and extra-curricular offer at both course and central University/SU levels that offer students opportunities for personal, professional and civic development
• Work in partnership with our students to incorporate the student voice at every level of decision-making within the university, register students to vote, ensure a diversity of students engage in leadership roles and student societies and support a culture of free and open debate
• Build the infrastructure for academic and sector leadership in student engagement, publishing evidence of the value and impact of student engagement for the student, the University and our wider community

MEASURE: 50% student turnout in SU elections, 30% in local elections and 60% in national elections

STUDENT WELLBEING AND INCLUSIVITY

WE WILL:

• Embed inclusive approaches in learning and teaching, provision of student services and delivery of co- and extra-curricular opportunities
• Ensure our welfare and academic support services incorporating personal tutors, peer assisted learning, academic, welfare, financial literacy and employability support services are widely accessible, inclusive and impactful
• Promote resilience, self-confidence, positive behaviours and mental and physical wellbeing among the student body
• Identify students at risk of failure and provide personalised support to help them to overcome barriers to their success
• Ensure student satisfaction key metrics scores at our study centres are comparable to the university average (teaching quality, academic support, assessment and feedback, overall satisfaction)

MEASURE: Achieve an
ABOVE-BENCHMARK student retention performance as measured in the Teaching Excellence Framework with comparable outcomes across age, sex, ethnicity, disability and level of socio-economic advantage

STUDENT OUTCOMES

WE WILL:

• Offer formal recognition to students who step beyond the requirements of the curriculum to develop themselves through internships, optional units, community projects, study abroad, engagement with subject or professional bodies or other forms of participation in the co-curriculum
• Develop mechanisms to demonstrate the learning gained from a course of study at the University of Bedfordshire, incorporating academic achievement and personal, professional and civic development
• Embed support for students’ employability throughout their student journey including through widespread provision of placements and work experience and delivery of structured career development opportunities
• Further develop the experience, engagement, profile and student voice of our postgraduate and early-career researchers

MEASURE: 75% graduate-level employment

OUR students come to us with an ambition to change their lives.

We make their aspirations possible through an active and inclusive approach to learning, rooted in real-world research, professional practice and community engagement. Over the next three years we will support our students to engage in their own personal journey of learning and development, working in partnership with our student body to create the conditions for each student, whatever their background, to succeed.
STAFF EXPERIENCE

WE WILL:
- Embed our Performance Development and Appraisal system to ensure all staff, including managers, have clear objectives, undertake continuous professional development and are enabled to champion collegial and constructive behaviours to create a great place to work
- Demonstrate leadership in sustaining a university culture which is built on listening, respect and understanding, as well as a firm foundation of freedom of thought, ideas and expression
- Create space – physical, virtual and thinking space – to liberate creativity, collaboration and the exchange and implementation of ideas

MEASURE: 75% of staff agree with ‘I WOULD RECOMMEND THE UNIVERSITY AS A GREAT PLACE TO WORK’ in staff surveys

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

WE WILL:
- Build on our successful Professional Teaching Scheme to increase the proportion of teaching staff gaining higher-level recognition from the Higher Education Academy
- Enhance our range of internal development opportunities for all staff, including rolling out leadership development opportunities through new higher and degree apprenticeships in leadership and management
- Ensure that all induction, statutory and mandatory development enables staff to connect with and understand their contribution to the University’s vision, values and strategy

MEASURE: Sustain our SECTOR-LEADING POSITION in the proportion of teaching staff achieving Higher Education Academy recognition across the designated categories of recognition

MEASURE: The delivery of FIVE POSITIVE CHANGES from the staff-led improvement programme

MEASURE: Continuous increases in the proportion of staff responding positively in staff surveys to ‘I BELIEVE THE UNIVERSITY VALUES MY CONTRIBUTION’

STAFF CONTRIBUTION

WE WILL:
- Create a culture of continuous staff-led improvement and value staff creativity through a formal programme to listen to staff voices and generate action for change
- Support and recognise staff who make a contribution to their community within and outside the University
- Further develop opportunities for staff to undertake international mobility, through Erasmus+ or as part of our partnership agenda

MEASURE: Sustain our SECTOR-LEADING POSITION in the proportion of teaching staff achieving Higher Education Academy recognition across the designated categories of recognition

ENGAGING OUR PEOPLE IN INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The transformative opportunities we provide for our students are only possible because of the commitment, ideas and professionalism of all our staff.

Over the next three years we will focus on building our collective resilience and ability to innovate. We will build a culture based on listening, collaborating, and the sharing of good ideas, supported by the provision of appropriate professional and personal development opportunities and enhanced by effective communication at all levels. This will be driven by feedback from our staff surveys.
EXPANDING HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

In a competitive recruitment market, we must look for new ways to achieve our mission to expand access to higher education.

We are willing, prepared and have the experience to be flexible and to adapt to the changing patterns of demand for higher education. In the next three years we will increase our academic partnerships to a sustainable 25 per cent of annual turnover and deliver new and different learning opportunities for new student markets. We do not wish to grow partnerships over the period of the plan by more than this, to do so might risk adversely affecting the overall University shape and structure. As we increase our delivery outside the UK we will seize the opportunity to embed an international perspective and global consciousness to all of our work, expanding opportunity for UK and international students alike. Through our partnerships we will spread educational opportunities, further international development and co-operation and increase and diversify our income, which we then reinvest in the University and the student experience both with our partners and in the core University.

ACCESS AND OUTREACH

WE WILL:
- Make continuous progress in expanding opportunities for disadvantaged and underrepresented students in higher education through our engagement framework for target schools and colleges and targeted provision for young carers and young adult carers
- Initiate targeted outreach activity in five ‘Gaps’ wards in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire and Eaton Bray in Milton Keynes as part of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme

MEASURE: ANNUAL INCREASE IN PARTICIPATION among white working-class men and maintaining participation rates among Black and minority ethnic students where we currently perform very strongly

DIVERSIFYING OUR OFFER

WE WILL:
- Embed our new Foundation Year, securing high progression rates onto Year 1 of our degree programmes
- Drive high-level Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skill acquisition in our region through the development of a new state-of-the-art STEM centre
- Roll out an accelerating programme of higher and degree-level apprenticeships

MEASURE: Sustain an ANNUAL PROGRESSION RATE from Foundation Year at higher than 70%

MEASURE: Grow STEM ENTRANTS by 200 annually

MEASURE: Deliver 20 new higher and degree level apprenticeships over three years, with uptake from employers and students sufficient to generate a contribution to income of £3 MILLION PER ANNUM by the end of the plan period

UK AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

WE WILL:
- Expand home partnership activity including partnership with private sector partners through London study centres and centres elsewhere in the UK, where there is demand
- Expand international education partnerships, including in Europe
- Develop an agile approach to partnerships based on core products, innovative models of practice and coordination from international Hub offices

MEASURE: Partnerships grow to a sustainable position of approximately 25% OF OVERALL TURNOVER, increasing overall contribution by 25%

MEASURE: 20% GROWTH in international student recruitment

INTERNATIONALISATION

WE WILL:
- Continue to pursue growth in international recruitment
- Enhance our global perspective through building staff exchange and training, knowledge exchange, internationalised curriculum development and consultancy into our partnerships, and resource our staff to operate across multiple locations
- Develop a University of Bedfordshire overseas campus to deliver international education outside the UK
- Enhance the sector-leading Go Global programme to include extended study abroad opportunities and further extend our engagement in Erasmus+ or its equivalent

MEASURE: 10% of partnership income growth visibly reinvested in support for staff and STUDENT INTERNATIONALISATION
Our research and knowledge exchange makes a real difference to business, the public sector and policymakers. We are creative in developing solutions to the challenges our external partners bring us. Over the next three years we will develop our research environment, embedding knowledge exchange and public engagement so that we can evidence the impact of our work with our partners. We take responsibility for our unique role in supporting our communities, improving public service delivery, quality of life and civic engagement.

**BROADENING UNDERSTANDING AND HORIZONS ACROSS THE COMMUNITIES WE ENGAGE**

**RESEARCH EXCELLENCE**

**WE WILL:**
- Ensure we are prepared to make a strong submission to REF 2021 which progresses from our excellent performance in REF 2014
- Strategically invest an annually increasing proportion of quality-related research income to develop a self-sustaining and internationally cited research and knowledge exchange infrastructure
- Support targeted development of research leadership capacity to form clusters of research expertise and practice aligned to real-world problems, growing income from research and knowledge exchange and improving performance in global citations

**MEASURE:** Projected performance in REF 2021 ADVANCES compared to REF 2014

**KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**

**WE WILL:**
- Building on Innovation Bridge and ICT Escalator, use our academic expertise to support organisations to improve their economic value through expansion of innovation development partnerships, graduate placements, enterprising projects and delivery of training for business
- Enhance the volume and profile of research and knowledge exchange associated with our STEM portfolio, working in partnership with businesses in the South East Midlands region
- Ensure that plans for impact are designed into all research and knowledge exchange bids, especially through identification of strategic funding partnerships, and that our academic workforce is equipped to be active in knowledge exchange

**MEASURE:** AVERAGE 5% annual increase in research and knowledge exchange income as measured through the Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**WE WILL:**
- Through our Research Institutes roll out an annual programme of public engagement activity that inspires our staff, students and external publics
- Enhance the volume and profile of research and knowledge exchange associated with our STEM portfolio, working in partnership with businesses in the South East Midlands region
- Ensure that plans for impact are designed into all research and knowledge exchange bids, especially through identification of strategic funding partnerships, and that our academic workforce is equipped to be active in knowledge exchange

**MEASURE:** Continuous increase in the number of business, public and third sector organisations we are engaged with, with a clear majority agreeing ‘I would recommend the University of Bedfordshire as a VALUED PARTNER TO OTHERS IN MY FIELD’

**CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP**

**WE WILL:**
- Model our civic values through embracing equality and diversity and environmental sustainability
- Conduct regular appraisals of our economic and social impact and solicit the views of our stakeholders in shaping and enhancing our practice

**MEASURE:** We will grow the ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT of the University of Bedfordshire against a 2017/18 baseline

**MEASURE:** 50,000 student volunteering hours annually