

Refreshed Corporate Plan

2011 - 2013

Statement from the Vice Chancellor

Sheffield Hallam University seeks to provide a distinctive student experience, one in which students achieve their potential and enhance their employment prospects in a wide range of professions. In our research we are known for the impact it has on the quality of life, solutions to questions of public policy, and our contribution to the knowledge economy.

A number of universities share that identity. However, our aim is to be the best and to be very clearly identified as a top 50 university.

We have refocused our priorities in order to ensure that the University is well positioned in the new environment and on a sustainable footing for the future. We recognise that this will require particular action in learning, teaching and the student experience, changes in the University's approach to research, and ongoing improvements to our enabling and support functions across the University.

Over the next three years we will focus relentlessly on the quality of our provision. This continuous improvement in our offer to students and our research outputs will ensure that the University remains a popular choice for students and we will be able to safeguard our position for the future.

Our Mission

Sheffield Hallam is an innovative and responsive university, committed to the belief that high quality inspirational teaching and applied research can transform individuals, organisations and communities.

Our Vision for 2015

By 2015 we will be an established top 50 university known for the quality of our teaching and learning and with a particular commitment to education for employment.

Our research strength will be concentrated in specific subject areas, but will be world class and designed to promote solutions that have a positive impact on the quality of life, solutions to questions of public policy, and contribute to the knowledge economy.

We will be known for the quality and range of our partnerships with the professions, business, industry and government.

Our Academic Aims

Learning, Teaching and the Student Experience

The quality of our student experience goes to the core of our very being. It is the dominant theme for the University now, and it will continue to be the dominant driver as we prepare for the new environment.

The student experience at Sheffield Hallam is characterised by its commitment to inspiring students to achieve their potential, enhancing student employability for a wide range of professions, and developing its learners to be confident communicators, capable of effectively using digital tools and resources.

The outcome of the Sheffield Hallam student experience is highly employable graduates equipped with the skills and knowledge to prepare them for a professional life, socially responsible and able to live and work effectively in the twenty first century.

Aim 1: To provide a high quality, vibrant and challenging learning experience to all our students

Objectives

- To develop a designed and managed student experience that delivers a clear and consistent range of entitlements for students.
- To improve the quality of our student experience as measured by student satisfaction, graduate employment, student retention and progression, with the aim of moving into the top 25% of UK Universities for all of these indicators.

Aim 2: To provide academically strong, relevant and financially viable programmes that are responsive to changing market conditions.

Objectives

- To ensure that we continuously develop and improve the curriculum to provide strong academic content, meet student demand and support the needs of employers and the professions.

Research and Innovation

We will be known for the quality of our research, for the proportion of our externally generated research income and for the impact of our research the quality of life and solutions to questions of public policy and for our contribution to the knowledge economy.

Research and innovation have always been an integral part of Sheffield Hallam University. We have always been one of the highest performing new universities for research and knowledge transfer and in terms of income we are competitive with a number of older universities.

In order to achieve our research and innovation aim, we recognise the need to ensure that our organisational structures and processes are aligned to support this. We will therefore review and refocus these activities to ensure that we can meet current and future changes in the research and innovation environment.

Aim 3: To create an innovative research environment within the University and use our skills to support innovation externally, working with organisations and companies to achieve economic and social transformation.

Objectives

- To create an innovative research environment within the University by selectively supporting areas of existing or potential international research strength.
- To ensure that our support for innovation is appropriately competitive at a regional, national or international level.
- To provide the optimum organisational framework to support innovative activities.

Our Enabling Aims

This section of the plan outlines our enabling aims and objectives that will ensure that we create an environment in which our academic aims can be delivered.

Managing and Developing our People

Our staff are vital to our success, and our People Strategy reflects our belief that business and people principles must go hand-in-hand if we are to successfully recruit, retain and develop our staff in an increasingly competitive market.

Developing a student and business focus means that the University's workforce must be aligned to changing expectations and demands.

In this changing environment we will ensure that we articulate a clear rationale for any changes that need to take place and in doing so we will consult staff on all major changes that affect them as well as reaffirming our strong commitment to partnership working with our recognised Trade Unions.

Aim 4: To recruit, motivate, and develop outstanding, diverse people who work together in a productive environment in which all are valued and where our talents are fully utilised to achieve organisational objectives

Objectives

- To ensure that we have the right calibre of staff and embed an expectation of high achievement as an integral aspect of our culture
- To proactively manage performance and capability to enable individual, team and organisational success
- To enhance the staff experience and promote wellbeing

Improving Operational Effectiveness

In the rapidly changing external environment it is essential that we are able to develop and flex the services that support the academic business of the University. Following a period of change and development over a number of years, we now need to consolidate our position and embed a culture of continual improvement to ensure that all our services support and respond to our academic priorities.

Our information systems and services are integral to learning, teaching and working at the University and some areas, such as our e-learning systems, are part of our market-leading offer and distinctiveness. We need to ensure we remain at the forefront in these areas in order to support our aims and ambitions.

Aim 5: To support the development of the student experience, academic business, and research and knowledge transfer activities by ensuring that our support processes and services are effective, efficient and fit for purpose.

Objectives

- To continually improve our processes and services to ensure that we deploy our resources most effectively and that we have the necessary resources to sustain the University in the long term.
- To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our information systems, and associated processes, so that resources can be focused on delivering activities and services which support our priorities.

Enhancing our Estate

The successful management of our estate is a core component in achieving our mission and vision. It is essential that our estates infrastructure continues to meet the needs of our students, staff and the wider community, as well as adapting to meet new standards and advances in ways of working.

The estates strategy sets out clear and accountable governance arrangements for the management of decisions related to land, property, buildings and infrastructure maintenance, and minor works. These arrangements will deliver and monitor the progress of estate developments and the estates strategy.

Aim 6: To provide a high quality, safe and sustainable estate that supports the development of academic activities, enhances the student and staff experience and projects our academic identity.

Objectives

- To enable the provision and maintenance of space that supports our plans for our academic activities in teaching, research and innovation.

Maintaining Financial Sustainability

We are in a sound financial position with positive reserves and access to external funding needed to support capital investment. However, we face a series of major challenges as a result of the reductions in public funding and uncertainty around the impact of the Government's reforms of the Higher Education sector. These factors represent a major challenge to the future financial stability of the sector as a whole, and our capacity to invest in quality will be compromised unless future costs and income are brought into alignment.

Given the inevitable constraints on our resources we need to make well informed decisions which reflect our priorities. Our strategic planning and day-to-day decision making cannot be driven solely academically or financially, but needs to bring together both sets of needs. This means that we must be academically led, but underpinned by a financial strategy and supported at an operational level by robust financial management. The successful implementation of the University's main academic strategies will provide the foundation for financial sustainability.

Our Financial Strategy will ensure that there is a balance between surplus levels, cash generation, borrowing and capital expenditure.

Aim 7: To ensure that the University continues to operate in a way that is financially sustainable.

Objectives

- To recover the full costs of our activities in order to provide the resources to invest in our staff and infrastructure, enabling us to deliver the Corporate Plan and meet the needs of all of our stakeholders.
- To support the sustainability of the University by implementing measures which create financial headroom, not only to manage any future financial challenges, but also to allow investment in our strategic priorities.

Communicating our Vision, Aims and Offer

The communication of our vision, aims and offer is critical. Communication takes many forms: it includes the University's web site, the prospectus, communications with schools and colleges, publications and formal and informal events. It also encompasses many different audiences: prospective students, current students, alumni and friends, staff, external stakeholders including business, professions, public bodies, and policy makers, and opinion formers. We need to ensure that we engage and communicate with all our audiences in the most appropriate and effective way in order to help us achieve our aims and objectives.

Aim 8: To communicate our vision, aims and offer, internally and externally, through the evolution of our brand and the development of appropriate media refined to meet the needs of particular groups.

Objectives

- To recognise clear segments of our markets and differentiate our offer appropriately and coherently.
- To develop our internal communications in order to engage staff with the issues affecting the University, support the communication of our purpose and position, and mobilise the University community around our strategic priorities.
- To establish and maintain strong relationships with our stakeholders and develop campaigns in line with our strategic vision and priorities.