

# Strategic Plan

2016–2021

# University vision, values and purpose

**The University of Stirling is an international university, with a global reputation for high-quality teaching and research. Everything we do makes a positive difference to people's lives. We are an agent for change, connecting people, innovating and transforming the lives of our students, staff and the global communities we serve.**

Stirling is numbered among the top 50 new universities in the world; a reputation that has been gained through the quality of our research, the impact it has had on society, and the skills and competencies of our graduates.

Our distinctiveness comes from our academics collaborating across disciplines to generate different perspectives to address key world issues. Graduates of the University are well equipped to play a leading role in society due to knowledge, initiative and resilience developed as part of their educational experience, and from the wider cultural and sporting opportunities available.

Stirling is a place where everyone is treated with respect and where ability – not background – is valued. We are open with one another and support people with specific needs; we acknowledge difference, and respect the right of students and staff to hold differing views.

We don't settle for second best. We strive for excellence in all we do, and work actively to support students and staff to perform at the very highest level. By doing so, our teaching and research makes a real and demonstrable impact on the economy, environment and society in Scotland and beyond.

**“Stirling is a place where ability – not background – is valued.”**



# Our vision for the University

**Our vision is to be recognised across the world as a University that addresses the needs of society through innovative interdisciplinary research; learning and teaching of the highest quality; and by sharing our knowledge with the world.**

## **The values that guide us:**

Our values inform everything we do and underpin our actions.

They are the foundation upon which we develop and grow as an institution:

### **Excellence**

Leading the way globally in our areas of research expertise and through the delivery of an outstanding learning experience.

### **Openness**

Being open in all we do, communicating the work and worth of the University to the wider world, and engaging people in the delivery of our vision.

### **Ambition**

Growing the University in innovative ways, embedding sustainability, and making it a role model for the sector.

## **Our purpose:**

Our contribution and approach are defined by:

*Developing* people and helping society through the pursuit and understanding of knowledge. We create the conditions for innovative, interdisciplinary research, and communicate what we have learned to the wider world in a clear and useful manner.

*Transforming* the lives of our students and staff by giving them opportunities to reach their full potential intellectually and emotionally; by making them resilient and giving them the skills they need for the modern world; and by instilling in them a sense of responsibility to promote public good.

*Creating* global citizens, working in partnership with governments, business and industry, the public and third sectors, and colleagues in other institutions, to identify and meet the changing needs of society.

**“Having the right people, with the right skills and attitude, is central to achieving our ambitions over the next five years.”**

Professor Gerry McCormac  
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

At Stirling we take pride in providing education with a purpose and conducting research that makes a difference to society. Our aim is to unlock the full potential of our students and staff, so that they can use their knowledge and skills to shape the world in a positive way. Our ambitions for the future, set out in this Strategic Plan, can be achieved through our collective will, passion and commitment.

# The foundations of “education with a purpose”

The University of Stirling’s story starts with a visionary who recognised that society was being transformed and it needed men and women skilled in navigating change.

Lord Robbins, our first Chancellor, was an economist who changed the face of higher education. He understood the importance of a skilled workforce to the future wealth and well-being of society. The Robbins Report widened access to higher education, and for almost 50 years the University of Stirling has been delivering the vision he first articulated.

Robbins valued learning. For him it was all about ‘education with a purpose’. And that phrase sums up what happens here. Our people – staff, students and graduates – take the skills and knowledge learned here to shape our society, our economy, and the environment. Our primary goal is preparing people to go out into this fast-moving world and transform it for the better.

The University is first and foremost a community of scholars. We exist to create new knowledge, deepen our understanding of it, and to share it at home and abroad. We have a global impact through our research, our international partnerships, and a growing international community of alumni providing leadership in countries, businesses and communities on every continent.

Our aim is to educate the whole person. Our students are not just taught, they are active participants in the learning process. Facts and information are readily accessible in a world increasingly dependent on technology. But the skills needed to understand, innovate and to create new knowledge have to be learned. And that is best done in a place that cherishes research-active academics with international reputations and connections.

In his report, Robbins was explicit about the importance of learning and teaching within an environment where research is prized. The University of Stirling is such a place, and our graduates understand the importance of innovation, creativity and enterprise.



## Doing things differently

The University of Stirling has always had a reputation for doing things differently. Imbued with the radicalism that defined the 1960s, it has never accepted the status quo or been attracted to conformity. It embraces difference and it values independent minds. We know that a ‘one-size-fits-all’ education is not an education fit for purpose in today’s world.

At the University we help individuals identify and use their natural abilities; we create the space for them to discover their passions, and provide opportunities for them to fulfil their aspirations. We were among the first to embrace modular degrees, allowing students to choose the building blocks of their courses.

We believe everyone with ability should have the opportunity to access higher education, and we have been pioneers in providing different entry routes to our courses. Many of our students are the first in their families to go to university and many come through non-traditional routes – for example through our partnership with Forth Valley College.

As Scotland’s University for Sporting Excellence, our students have access to some of the country’s finest coaches and mentors. The link between physical well-being and academic achievement is well known. The sporting opportunities we provide reinforce our commitment to health and well-being: developing leadership and team skills, mental and physical agility, and building resilience.

Alongside sport, the University has valued art, heritage and culture from its inception. Visitors to the campus are exposed to the best in Scottish and international art – and they have access to the best in cinema and the dramatic arts in the Macrobert Arts Centre.

## A clear vision

By delivering on our commitment to transform the lives of our students, and develop our staff, we fulfil a wider purpose. We make a direct contribution to the global communities we serve; we add to the economic and cultural capital of Scotland; and we make a difference to the lives of people around the world who benefit from our research and the skills of our graduates.

We have a clear vision. This Strategic Plan will guide our decision-making over the next five years – a period that includes our landmark 50th anniversary. It was developed as the result of one of the widest consultations in the University’s history and was shaped by the people who will deliver it. Our strategy reflects our sense of common purpose to lead the sector, and to deliver real benefits for people.

What we do, we do with a purpose – and that purpose is to give people the skills they need to shape the future and make a positive impact on the world.

“Our primary goal is to prepare people for this fast-moving world and transform it for the better.”



Arron Gunn  
BSc (Hons) Sport and  
Exercise Science

# Objectives

**We are ambitious. During the development of this strategy, our staff, students and stakeholders were clear that we must set our aims high. This is the best way of securing our achievements and the surest way to build on them.**

We live in a world that is highly competitive and where change is a constant. The needs of individuals and society do not stand still, and we must be responsive to those changing needs.

To be a globally-connected university, we must continue to build and strengthen further our international links by: connecting with partner universities, organisations and people around the world; producing research with global relevance and impact; and graduating students as global citizens, who will play a leadership role in their communities, wherever they live. To achieve these goals we will:

**Ensure internationalisation is at the heart of everything we do**

We have identified a set of overarching institutional objectives that will help us focus on the practical steps needed to achieve our goals and to establish the University in the global top 200:

**Be one of the top 25 universities in the UK**

**Increase our income by £50 million**

**Enhance our research profile by 100 percent**

Our objectives are underpinned by a more detailed set of operational strategies and performance measures that are monitored regularly, individually, collectively and by University Court.

In delivering our 25-50-100 objectives, we will focus on four key areas: Learning, teaching and the student experience; Research with impact; Partnerships and public engagement; and Effectiveness and sustainability. Our objectives will be delivered using key institutional enablers which describe the way we do things at Stirling: our connectivity; our commitment to innovation; and our capacity to transform people's lives.

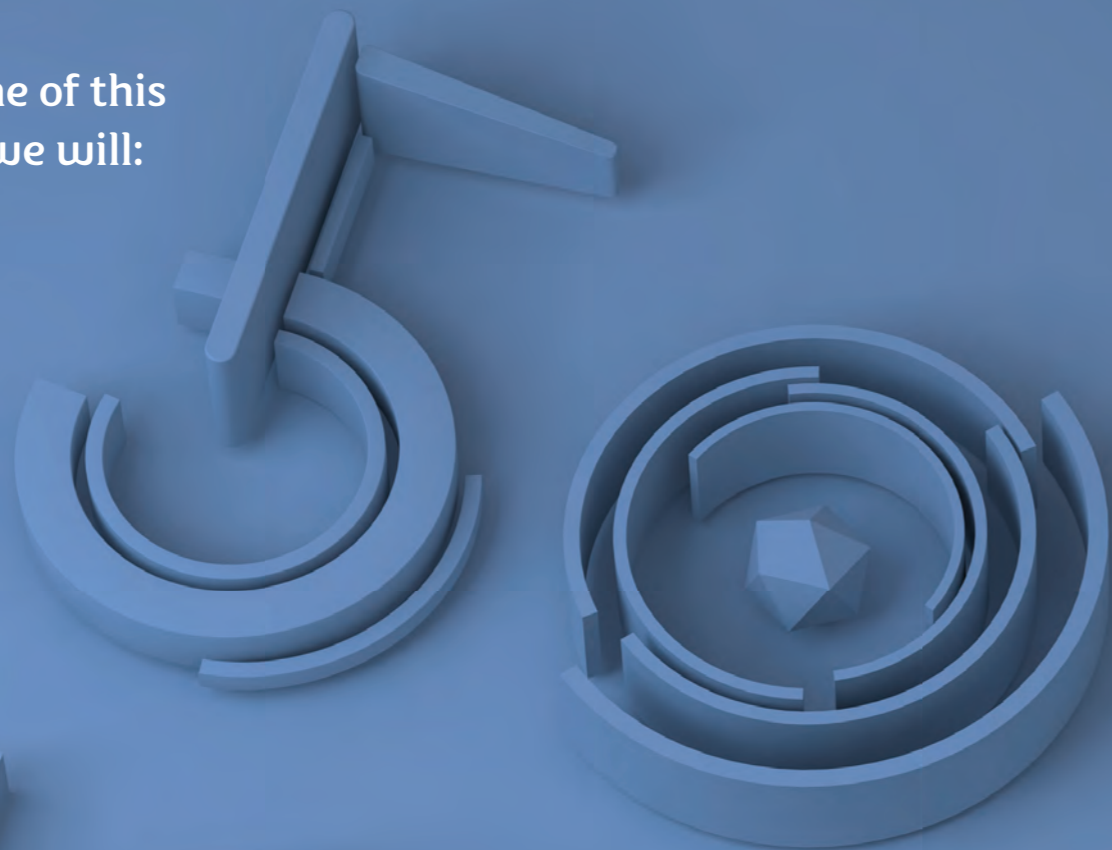
**Connect**  
Building deep and mutually-beneficial partnerships locally, nationally and internationally to help us deliver real benefits for society, the economy and our students and staff.

**Innovate**  
Finding new ways of thinking and doing things that place us at the cutting edge; identifying opportunities that benefit students, staff and stakeholders; growing income through research, knowledge exchange and commercialisation; and ensuring our curriculum meets the needs of citizens in the 21st century.

**Transform**  
Inspiring our staff and students and exposing them to new ideas, experiences and opportunities; giving them the capacity to change society for the better; improving people's quality of life and stimulating growth.



Over the lifetime of this Strategic Plan we will:



## Increase our income by £50 million

Increase total income by £50 million from a baseline in 2014/15

Double the value of Research Grant and Contract (RGC) income

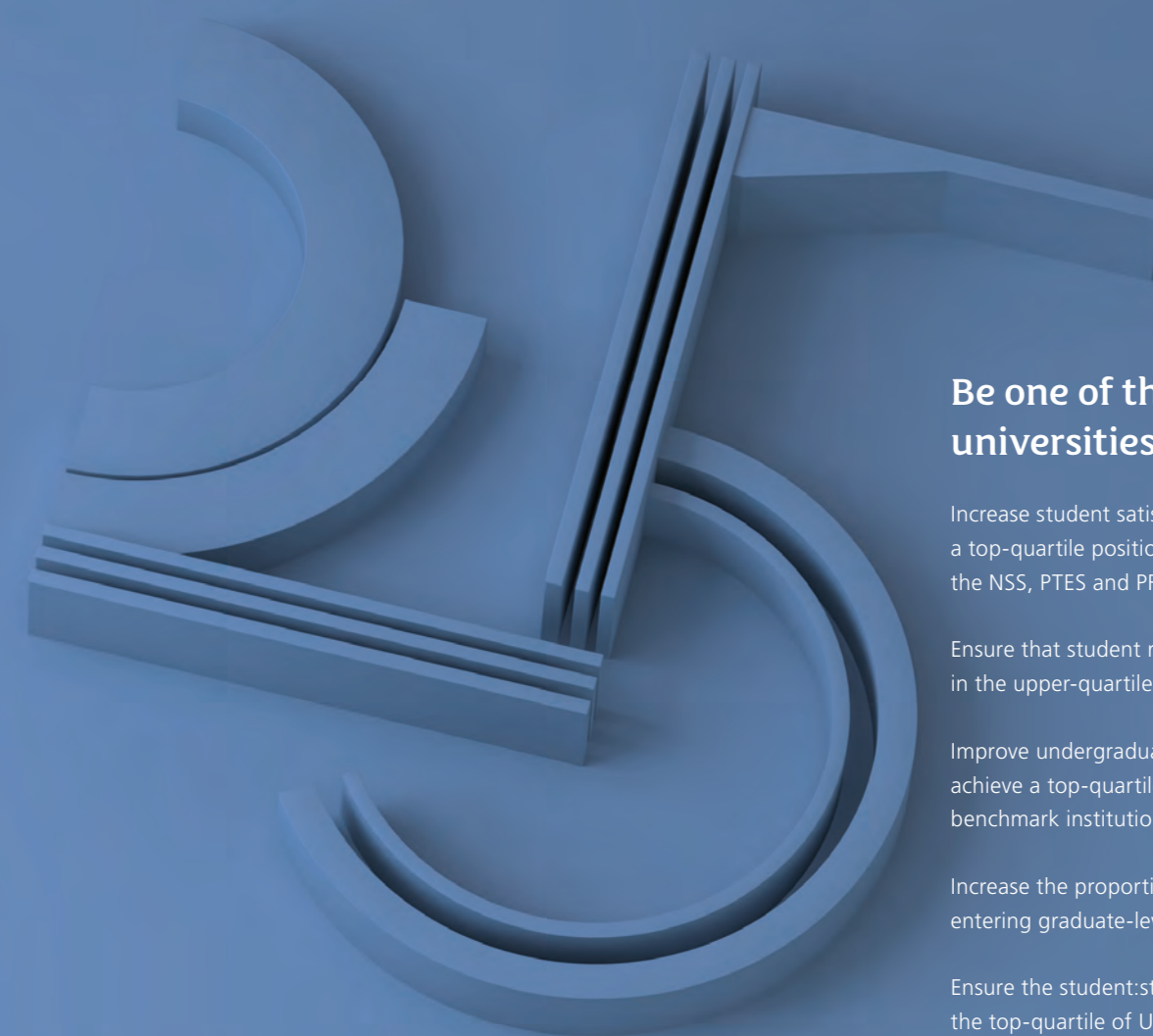
Increase international student numbers by 65% through enhanced online, distance and trans-national education

Grow our commercial activity and increase the value of other income by 50%



## Enhance internationalisation

Ensure an international outlook is at the heart of everything we do



## Enhance our research profile by 100 percent

Improve our academic reputation and increase our ranking in global surveys by 100 places

Secure a place among the world's top 200 universities for research citations per academic member of staff

Improve our research environment by growing the number of PhD students and externally-funded researchers by 30%

## Be one of the top 25 universities in the UK

Increase student satisfaction and achieve a top-quartile position as measured by the NSS, PTES and PRES

Ensure that student retention rates are in the upper-quartile of UK institutions

Improve undergraduate entry tariffs to achieve a top-quartile position among benchmark institutions

Increase the proportion of leavers entering graduate-level jobs to 85%

Ensure the student:staff ratio is among the top-quartile of UK institutions

# Learning, teaching and the student experience



Karen Lai Hiu Man (Hong Kong)  
BSc (Hons) Environmental Science

**“In helping our mix of international students to achieve their full potential, I am contributing to making our campus a rich, global learning and teaching environment.”**

Maria Cid Castilla  
Internationalisation Manager  
Development and External Affairs

In my role as Internationalisation Manager I am responsible for the development and management of short-term study programmes for incoming international students. I am passionate about offering our students the best possible experience. Working across the University, I am developing initiatives that enhance student experience from pre-arrival to post-study.

I particularly like being part of such a diverse and vibrant academic community and being able to work with a lovely blend of cultures, languages and nationalities. I believe Stirling is a unique place to study and it is rewarding to know that my team is playing a part both in helping international students to achieve their full potential and in making our campus a rich, global learning, teaching and living environment.

The University draws its students from around the world. Many of our undergraduates are school-leavers, but other students come to us through non-traditional routes, adopting different modes of study – part time, blended learning and online.

Over the past five decades, we have built a reputation for the quality of our learning and teaching, our supportive and encouraging ethos, and the quality of our graduates.

We give our graduates the best possible start in life by focusing on learning and teaching, embracing the latest advances in pedagogy, and building strong partnerships with future employers. The setting of our Stirling campus enhances the quality of life of our scholarly community, and is the base from which we connect with the world.

As technology changes, the way our students and staff interact with the sources of knowledge, and how they communicate it, changes too. We will maximise the potential of the digital age – recognising its transformative power – but in a way that preserves our commitment to core academic skills that expand the minds of our students and deepen their learning.

Learning requires hard work and commitment from students and staff alike. But we know from experience that creating the right conditions to optimise learning is also vitally important.

**“We help our students identify and develop their passions, and thereby reach their full potential.”**

## To achieve our learning and teaching objectives we will:

### Connect

- Working with business, the public and the third sectors to identify and embed skills that will enhance the employability of our students, and give them the tools they will need to build successful careers.
- Using our global employer, alumni and university networks to offer international experiences to all our students, and to enhance international diversity on campus.
- Creating an inclusive environment, actively promoting equality and enriching our students' lives by encouraging them to experience and understand the different cultures, beliefs and traditions of our student body.
- Developing shared spaces to enhance the sense of community, encourage group learning, and support people from across academic disciplines to come together.

### Innovate

- Delivering courses informed by the latest global research so students gain full benefit from studying at an international, research-led university.
- Using technology creatively to enhance pedagogy, and deepen and broaden the learning experience for all our students.
- Creating learning spaces that exploit the potential of new technologies, and which support the different ways people learn and interact.
- Valuing learning, and developing independent critical and reflective thinking through innovative learning and teaching.
- Identifying opportunities to improve what we do by actively embracing the digital age and deploying innovative assessment processes.

### Transform

- Helping students identify and develop their intellectual, sporting and cultural passions, encouraging well-being and resilience and supporting students to reach their full potential.
- Providing life-changing opportunities – in Stirling and through international exchanges – that give our students new perspectives and broaden their horizons.
- Creating a personal relationship between our students and the University, promoting flexible study that adapts to our students' individual needs.
- Attracting the brightest minds – regardless of background – to join our learning community and contribute to its vitality.
- Producing graduates who are active global citizens by making them socially, culturally and environmentally aware.

### Outcomes

We will measure success with the following outcomes and targets:

- Securing student satisfaction scores in the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) that place us in the top-quartile of UK universities.
- Increasing taught postgraduate student numbers by 20 percent from the 2014-15 baseline.

- Increasing overseas student numbers by 65 percent from the 2014-15 baseline, ensuring diversity by drawing students from a broad range of countries at all levels of study.
- Building on our strong record for widening access, contributing to national priorities, and ensuring a high level of degree completion for all students.

- Expanding opportunities for students to get work-related experience and setting a target of 85 percent for graduates entering graduate-level employment or further study.
- Working with external partners to increase undergraduate places for all nationalities, including Scottish students.

“I work in close collaboration with students and colleagues to develop and shape our academic programmes.”

*Markus Kittler*

Dr Markus Kittler  
Programme Director  
University of Stirling Management School

As Programme Director, I am determined to create a positive, transformative learning experience for students. By working in collaboration with colleagues, employers and with students, we shape programmes which help our learners to become critical and creative individuals. Students play an important role in that development – their feedback is crucial in shaping our programme delivery. I feel extremely humbled that my work is recognised by students and their nominations have led me to winning a number of Recognising Achievement in Teaching Excellence (RATE) Awards.



Simron Kandola  
BA (Hons) Human Resource  
Management and Law  
Pia Fath  
MSc International Human  
Resource Management



Thomas Tierney  
BA (Hons) Business Studies

“It’s great to see our students develop the confidence, skills and experience to succeed in the graduate market.”

*Pamela Crawford*

Pamela Crawford  
Joint Head of Careers and Employability  
Student, Academic and Corporate Services

I work closely with students, staff and employers to build Stirling’s capacity and reputation for helping our students achieve lifelong career management skills and success. This means supporting students to gain the right employability skills, developing these and engaging with those employers who interest and inspire them. I want to empower our students to make the most of their time at university – to develop confidence in their abilities and aspirations. Influencing positive change in students’ lives and seeing them take meaningful strides in their career development is what I love about my job.



# Research with impact



We strongly believe that the most effective universities are those that embrace a strong research ethos benchmarked against international standards.

There is a direct connection between research and excellence in learning and teaching. The best educators are more often men and women who are working at the frontiers of knowledge in their subject areas.

Academically, it gives us global reputational reach and connectivity, improves our ability to attract the highest-quality staff, and helps us inspire our students.

Ground-breaking research is one of the ways we make an impact on society at home and abroad. It is central to our mission. It allows us to shape the future, impacting on people's health, education and well-being; allowing people to better understand and engage with the world around them; and providing opportunities to create wealth and stimulate growth.

This in turn has a direct impact on our ability to achieve income growth targets from research, knowledge exchange and student recruitment activities.

**“We are carrying out ground-breaking research that has a positive impact on communities worldwide.”**

**“Preventing chronic disease is one of the main challenges of our age. I’m fortunate to lead a team conducting research that makes a positive difference to the health and well-being of our society.”**

Professor Linda Bauld  
Dean of Research Impact and Director of the Institute for Social Marketing  
Faculty of Health Sciences and Sport

My team conducts research that helps shape health policies to reduce the harm from alcohol and tobacco. We have generated evidence to inform key policies such as tobacco plain packaging and alcohol minimum unit pricing. Smoking and harmful use of alcohol are international challenges so we work with researchers, professionals and policy makers across the world. Collectively we are trying to find workable, innovative solutions to prevent health problems before they start.

## To achieve our research objectives we will:

### Connect

- Collaborating with business and industry, other universities and the public sector to ensure our research directly benefits society, nationally and internationally.
- Extending and strengthening our research partnerships and collaborations, nationally and internationally.
- Ensuring our research contributes to economic, social and cultural growth and gains the recognition it merits.
- Transferring knowledge by maintaining a culture of openness and accessibility.

### Innovate

- Utilising our established interdisciplinary focus to address real-world problems and find creative solutions.
- Promoting the impact of our research on society and the economy.
- Supporting the commercialisation of research and building our reputation for applied research.
- Using our research profile to support curriculum development, ensuring our learning and teaching is informed by current and new knowledge.

### Transform

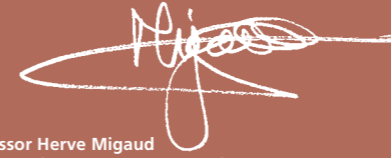
- Building on the success of REF2014 and expanding our current levels of research activity.
- Developing and enhancing research leadership across all academic areas by creating an ethos that encourages personal development, interdisciplinary work, and mentoring.
- Nurturing a culture of success by developing our research talent and providing an environment in which early career researchers thrive.
- Instilling in our undergraduates an understanding of the importance of research, and creating opportunities for those who have the potential to develop research careers.

## Outcomes

We will measure success with the following outcomes and targets:

- Securing a place in the global top 200 for our research and deepening our relationships with international universities with strong research reputations.
- Increasing the number of research-active students, maintaining our recognised Doctoral Training Centres, and creating a critical mass of researchers.
- Increasing our external grant income by 100 percent during the lifetime of this strategy, and increasing externally-funded research-only staff numbers by 30 percent.
- Growing the number of teaching and research staff towards a target of 500 – in line with growth in student numbers.
- Achieving an annual year-on-year increase in income from our enterprise activities.

“My work combines the strength of academic and industry expertise. Together we are addressing sustainability problems on a global scale.”



Professor Herve Migaud  
Director of Research, Institute of Aquaculture  
Faculty of Natural Sciences

My work connects the University with leading organisations in the aquaculture sector to develop innovative projects that drive economic growth. I lead several high-profile research projects totalling £6.6 million. By collaborating with industry on a large scale we can find innovative and practical solutions to problems which affect worldwide sustainability and food supply problems, while boosting our research profile. Working collectively with the Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre, Marine Harvest Scotland, Scottish Sea Farms and Biomar, we are helping to solve bottlenecks which are limiting salmon productivity.



“The interdisciplinary work we are doing is shaping government policy and helping Scotland’s ageing population.”



David Bell

Professor David Bell  
Professor of Economics  
University of Stirling Management School

Helping shape government policy and position the University as a credible authority in the UK is work that I am very proud to do. I am working collaboratively with colleagues across faculties on a study into our elderly population, which will inform future improvements to well-being and improve our understanding of the implications of an ageing population. This shows the transformative change we can effect together – it’s what brings me to Stirling every day.

Alison Bowes

Professor Alison Bowes  
Dean  
Faculty of Social Sciences

My team’s research aims are to improve experiences of living longer, to ensure that older people’s contribution to our society is valued and that the benefits of longevity for our society are fully realised. Improving care and support in older age is one element of this, along with understanding how to share the benefits of healthy and active ageing. Our interdisciplinary approach brings together complementary skills and knowledge – this enables us to conduct research which really makes a difference to life for individuals, families and communities. We’re all ageing all the time: this is research that matters for everyone.



# Partnerships and public engagement



“Finding new ways to connect with businesses and colleges ensures we produce skilled graduates who are ready for the future world of work.”

  
Dr John Rogers  
Director of Research and Enterprise

Dr Ken Thomson (Left)  
Principal, Forth Valley College

By working in partnership with businesses and other institutions to develop innovative courses in response to current and future demands of employers, we are better equipping our graduates with the skills they need in the global workplace. Through our strong links with Forth Valley College and connections to employers, we have established integrated degree courses which are producing skilled graduates in the digital, heritage, creative and life science sectors.

Our Innovation Park is a major conduit for business and enterprise. Developing distinctive initiatives and opportunities like these requires us to use innovation and creativity every day – and is great fun!

From their beginnings, universities have been important drivers of change. Academics and staff in professional support services understand instinctively the importance of partnerships. They work closely with governments, business and industry; they have global connections, and are entrepreneurial and committed to making the world a better place.

Universities provide a meeting place for business and industry, governments, the public sector, and people from across civic society. They are places where free thinking and free expression is cherished, and where difficult issues can be discussed in a constructive way.

In an increasingly inter-connected world, our partnerships and public engagement activities help us make a real impact on society, making the most of our intellectual, cultural, and sporting assets.

As Scotland’s University for Sporting Excellence we have a particular responsibility to provide leadership in this area – nurturing elite athletes who can compete at an international level; maximising participation in sport; and promoting well-being – with all the benefits that brings to people – physically, intellectually and emotionally.

One of the clear ambitions of this strategy is developing long-term intellectual capital, and economic and environmental sustainability. That can best be achieved by securing the active support for our vision from government, major funders, business and industry, and broader civic society.

The better we understand the needs of our partners and the more they value our work, the easier it will be to deliver our overall strategy.

“Our partnerships and public engagement activities help us make a real impact on society.”

## To achieve our partnerships and public engagement objectives we will:

### Connect

- Positioning the University of Stirling as a model of a publicly-engaged university, building and sustaining strong relationships with all our stakeholders.
- Providing thought leadership and creating a public space where major issues of the day can be explored; championing knowledge exchange, and encouraging volunteering.
- Building global partnerships with institutions, businesses and industry for mutual benefit that create opportunities for students, staff and the economy.
- Communicating the impact of our research by using the University's environmental, cultural and sporting assets to connect with key audiences.
- Opening the campus to members of our wider community, allowing them to develop their skills through exposure to art, sculpture, theatre, cinema, public lectures and sport.

### Outcomes

We will measure success with the following outcomes and targets:

- Developing up to five key multi-dimensional and long-term overseas partnerships with leading international institutions.
- Growing the number and quality of partnerships the University has with industry, policy makers and other higher education institutions in the UK and internationally.

### Innovate

- Making best use of our natural assets and the built environment, championing environmental sustainability through the way we work, the research we conduct and our public engagement activity.
- Developing a culture of sporting innovation that transforms participation, well-being and the health of staff, students and the wider community, making them more resilient to the challenges of life.
- Finding new ways of communicating our work to stakeholders and the wider public with the aim of encouraging a learning ethos in society and securing active support for our work.

- Ensuring we meet our ambitions to share knowledge by improving our performance in national knowledge exchange metrics.
- Fully demonstrating the impact of the University on society through an effective programme of public engagement – creating multiple opportunities for our stakeholders and the wider public to engage with the University.

### Transform

- Actively promoting equality and diversity, and eliminating discrimination by creating an environment that reflects our commitment to social justice and ensures transformational experiences are accessible to all.
- Using our expertise to play a leading role in the development of public sector and industry agendas at a national and international level.
- Pioneering environmental sustainability through our business practices and behaviours; and championing sustainable practices and living through our research.
- Fostering mutually-beneficial partnerships with organisations that help us amplify the impact of our research and knowledge exchange, and enable us to use it for the public good.
- Leading global initiatives that promote sport, health and well-being by deploying our research reputation in sport, health sciences and education, and by embracing our role as Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence.

- Enhancing our external profile and position by actively promoting the work of the University and its people, and celebrating success.
- Being seen by the sector and others as a role model for how large and complex organisations should be run.
- Actively promoting a work and study environment that enhances the health and well-being of staff and students, and enables them to achieve their full potential.



“A creative environment stimulates creative thinking and can inspire a whole community.”

I have two passions in my working life – public engagement and interdisciplinary research and teaching. As the Director of the Centre for Environment, History and Policy (CEHP), I have the opportunity to do both. Working collaboratively with several local organisations, I am strengthening links with the University and increasing public participation in art projects.

C. Mills

Dr Catherine Mills  
Director of the Centre for Environment,  
Heritage and Policy  
Faculty of Arts and Humanities

We work to make knowledge visible. My focus as curator of the Art Collection is making art and culture a part of everyday life for staff, students and visitors; enabling exchanges between art, research and teaching. I do this through an active programme of events that improves access and inspires people to engage with art. They tell me that it enriches their lives.

Jane Cameron  
Curator of the University Art Collection  
Development and External Affairs



“My research examines whether something as simple as a daily walk in the playground makes an impact on children’s physical and mental well-being.”

I am passionate about improving the health of the community. My work with local providers helps me look at physical activity and exercise levels in the community and enables me to evaluate programmes already in place. Working with local schools on the Daily Mile project has been a particularly fulfilling and rewarding experience. There are many reported anecdotal benefits of the Daily Mile; we are now investigating scientifically, whether something as simple as a daily walk or run can make a difference to the physical well-being and concentration levels of children in the classroom.

N. Brooks

Dr Naomi Brooks  
Lecturer in Health and Exercise Sciences  
Faculty of Health Sciences and Sport

# Effectiveness and sustainability



**“Our CHP facility is reducing the University’s annual carbon emissions by around 2,800 tonnes – that’s enough CO<sub>2</sub> to fill 3,000 hot air balloons!”**

Lewis Matthews  
Senior Maintenance Manager  
Estates and Campus Services

We are committed to being a responsible and sustainable organisation. The introduction of our Combined Heat and Power Plant (CHP) has reduced the University’s carbon footprint by around 2,800 tonnes per year, and generated an annual reduction in utility costs of over £500,000. This innovative project was one of only three major carbon-reduction schemes funded by the Scottish Funding Council.

**“We embrace innovation by investing in new technologies to deliver more effective resources to our staff and students.”**

**As a global university, we have an important role to play in promoting sustainability, both locally and internationally, and a duty to nurture our resources – human and physical.**

Sustainability is embedded in everything we do, whether that is teaching and research or the services we offer students and staff.

We are continually reducing our carbon footprint and are helping to support the government’s carbon emission targets for Scotland.

By delivering world-class research we are sought out by governments, businesses and other universities wanting to be associated with the best. Our reputation for teaching excellence attracts high-quality staff and students and expands our international reach. By embracing the highest levels of professionalism in how we manage the University, we strive to maximise our resources.

As a major employer, we contribute significantly to the regional economy and take this responsibility seriously – investing in our staff and supporting them to achieve their ambitions. Stirling has always invested in professional and personal development, particularly in championing the role of women leaders in higher education through activities such as the Athena SWAN, Aurora and Stepping Stones initiatives.

Building a strong leadership ethos – in academic and professional services – is important to us; but just as important is creating a sense of common purpose.

Whether in academia, professional services or support roles, we are all part of the same team, working to achieve the same ends. Strong teams ensure consistency of delivery and reduce the risks of single points of failure – both critical for delivering a high quality service for our students, staff and stakeholders.

We recognise the need to secure the University’s future by maximising sustainable income streams and managing our expenditure. We prize good governance and are a well-run and effective institution, meeting the needs of our students, staff and society.

We take pride in our professionalism and are constantly reviewing and renewing our business practices to deliver more innovative services to meet the needs of our students, staff and stakeholders. We replaced the Wi-Fi system on campus, future-proofing it insofar as is possible in the fast moving world of IT.

Increasing constraints on resources requires us to be more efficient and effective than ever before. We recognise that the best way of securing our future is by being effective, agile and resilient; by identifying and seizing opportunities; and by focusing on what we do best and delivering.

## To achieve our effectiveness and sustainability objectives we will:

### Connect

- Delivering effective and efficient professional services that are valued, consistently high quality, and financially sustainable.
- Implementing our shared vision through continued engagement with our staff, students and external partners. We will measure progress by setting milestones, making adjustments where necessary, and celebrating success.
- Consulting stakeholders by actively listening to what they have to say and responding appropriately through transparent decision-making.
- Demonstrating our accountability through effective governance structures that reflect the diversity of those we serve.

### Innovate

- Delivering operational best practice, ensuring it supports innovative learning and teaching; creative and sector-leading research activity; and effective partnerships and public engagement.
- Generating new income streams to invest in institutional priorities, increasing the University's self-reliance.
- Being creative in how we manage our assets to maximise their use and income raising potential.
- Using technology to improve effectiveness, ensuring business processes meet the needs of students, staff and stakeholders.
- Releasing the full potential of our people by: celebrating our achievements internally and externally; showcasing success; and instilling a sense of institutional pride in our staff.

### Transform

- Harnessing the full capabilities of all our people by actively promoting gender equality, and advancing equality of opportunity among those who share a protected characteristic.
- Leveraging maximum benefit from our available resources to deliver our vision for the University.
- Creating spaces where our community can come together intellectually, socially and culturally by investing in our estate and developing the University's physical and technological infrastructure.
- Ensuring staff are valued, passionate about their roles and inspired to provide the highest quality services.
- Investing in personal and professional development and leadership at all levels in the University, encouraging secondments to deepen and broaden the professional experience of our staff, and actively encouraging ideas and innovative approaches to work.
- Through investment in our work and study environment, creating a campus that attracts and retains well-qualified staff.

### Outcomes

We will measure success with the following outcomes and targets:

- Increasing our annual income by £50 million from the 2014/15 baseline, and generating sufficient revenue to invest in institutional priorities throughout the lifetime of the Strategic Plan.

- Being a sector leader by being ranked in the top quartile as 'a good place to work'. This will be measured in our biennial staff survey.
- Providing outstanding academic and professional services, to build on our strong record for student retention, attainment and satisfaction.

- Being seen as an innovator in higher education management, and benchmarking our operational effectiveness against the 'best in class' in the higher education, public and private sectors.
- Achieving Athena SWAN institutional Silver and a departmental Gold award.

I am focussed on positioning Stirling as a venue of choice for students, businesses and visitors. Working in partnership with organisations, such as VisitScotland, we bring global conferences to our campus and help to place Stirling on the business map. My team works incredibly hard to showcase all Stirling Venues facilities, including our hotel, conference facilities and student accommodation. When we meet our targets, we're helping to generate additional income for reinvestment in high-quality facilities and services for our students – and that's a big motivation for my team.

“Providing a high-quality student experience is at the heart of what we do – by diversifying and growing our income streams, we can achieve even more.”

*Liam Spillane*

Liam Spillane  
Director of Commercial Services



“Running the Union’s environmental hub means I am contributing to helping the Students’ Union reduce waste and energy consumption.”

*Laurelin van der Molen*

Laurelin van der Molen  
Environmental Projects  
Co-ordinator  
Students’ Union

I run the Union's environmental hub: the Green and Blue Space. From here we deliver the Union's environmental projects around waste and energy-use reduction and facilitate sustainable and environmental student activity. We have a community garden on campus which is managed by students and shared with the local community. We grow everything using organic methods. I work with a wonderful team of volunteers, the Union, University, and a variety of external partners to build a sustainable community.



Robert Morrison

Robert Morrison  
Web Developer  
Communications, Marketing and Public Engagement

As a Web Developer I work closely with our web editors across the University's faculties and directorates. Building on the core technologies provided by Information Services, my job in the Marketing team is to create the templates, structures and styles that define the University's online presence. By implementing these building-blocks effectively, we are connecting with a worldwide audience. It's particularly rewarding to know we are consistently helping to improve the experience for everyone who visits our website.



**“By using the best technology, and creating readily accessible online spaces, we are helping transform study and working environments.”**

K McCabe

Kathy McCabe  
University Librarian and Director of Information Services

My area is helping to transform the way our staff and students connect with each other and the wider world. We increased JANET network connectivity which has enabled the University to embrace cloud technology. The introduction of high-quality Wi-Fi allows us to remain constantly connected to the network and has led to a significant increase in student engagement with our virtual learning environment.





**“Our people are our most valuable asset and the contribution of staff is critical to our success.”**

*Eileen Schofield*

**Eileen Schofield**  
University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer

The strength of Stirling is its people. We value ability and aim to retain and attract talented individuals and assist them in realising their full potential. The level of engagement and enthusiasm shown by our students, staff and members of the global University community in developing this Plan, gives us the confidence that together we will achieve our future ambitions.

# Summary

**This strategy builds on our previous Strategic Plan.** On one level it recognises the importance of continuity but it also charts an even more ambitious trajectory.

Our objectives can be summarised by the mnemonic '25-50-100':

**Be one of the top 25 universities in the UK**

**Increase our income by £50 million**

**Enhance our research profile by 100 percent**

In delivering our objectives, we will:

**Ensure internationalisation is at the heart of everything we do**

Each of the three objectives, and our commitment to be an international university, will be monitored by University Court.



**“This plan illustrates the scale of our ambition to be a globally-connected university.”**

*Fiona Sandford*

**Fiona Sandford**  
Chair of the University Court

The Strategic Plan 2016–2021 signals the next stage in the realisation of our vision to be recognised across the world as a university that addresses the needs of society through innovative interdisciplinary research; learning and teaching of the highest quality; and by sharing our knowledge with the world.

# Conclusion

**Stirling has risen to the challenge set by Lord Robbins half a century ago. Robbins saw the expansion of higher education – of which Stirling was a part – as “an essential condition for the realisation in the modern age of the ideals of a free and democratic society.”**

The University has delivered on that. It has done so through a mix of intellectual rigour and pragmatism, harnessed to a clear vision.

Everything we do is done with a purpose. We discover things and make sure those who can benefit know about it; we provide a challenging and stimulating environment for learning and teaching; we make a difference to society.

The scale of our aspiration comes from active discussions with the broad University community and our external partners. That knowledge in itself is enough to give us confidence that we can deliver our shared vision, regardless of the changing environment in which we work. By 2021 we will be better connected; we will have delivered innovation in all sorts of ways; and, through our people, we will have transformed the lives of many others.

**“Everything we do is done with a purpose.”**

Find out how our people are delivering the Strategic Plan at:  
[www.stir.ac.uk/strategicplan](http://www.stir.ac.uk/strategicplan)

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White House Studios

**University of Stirling**  
FK9 4LA Scotland, UK  
[www.stir.ac.uk](http://www.stir.ac.uk)  
T: 01786 473171

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