

University of Stirling
Employability Strategy 2017 – 2021

1. Overview

The 2017-2021 Employability Strategy aims to:

- Produce confident, aspirational graduates who can successfully compete in a competitive global economy
- Significantly enhance the reputation of the University of Stirling as a university of choice for business to find and recruit students and graduates
- Position the University of Stirling as a centre of innovation in employability practice

Our Key Performance Indicators are clear. By 2021 we will:

1. Include work based and/or work related learning in all our programmes
2. Have a minimum rate of 85% graduate level employment for undergraduates and postgraduates (TPG and RPG)
3. Increase our ranking in the QS World University Rankings Survey for reputation in business engagement to be in the top 200
4. Improve the scores on the relevant National Student Survey questions on employability to 85% (Question B13)
5. Improve the scores on the relevant Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey questions on employability to 85% (Question 16)

The strategy's success will be based on productive partnership working across the University between faculties, students, services and business. The strategy adopts an impact focus in its approach and employability will be measured, reviewed and planned using robust impact indicators of success.

The intention is for the strategy to be comprehensive and to be applicable to undergraduates and both taught and research based postgraduates whatever their mode of study: full-time; part-time; online/distance learning.

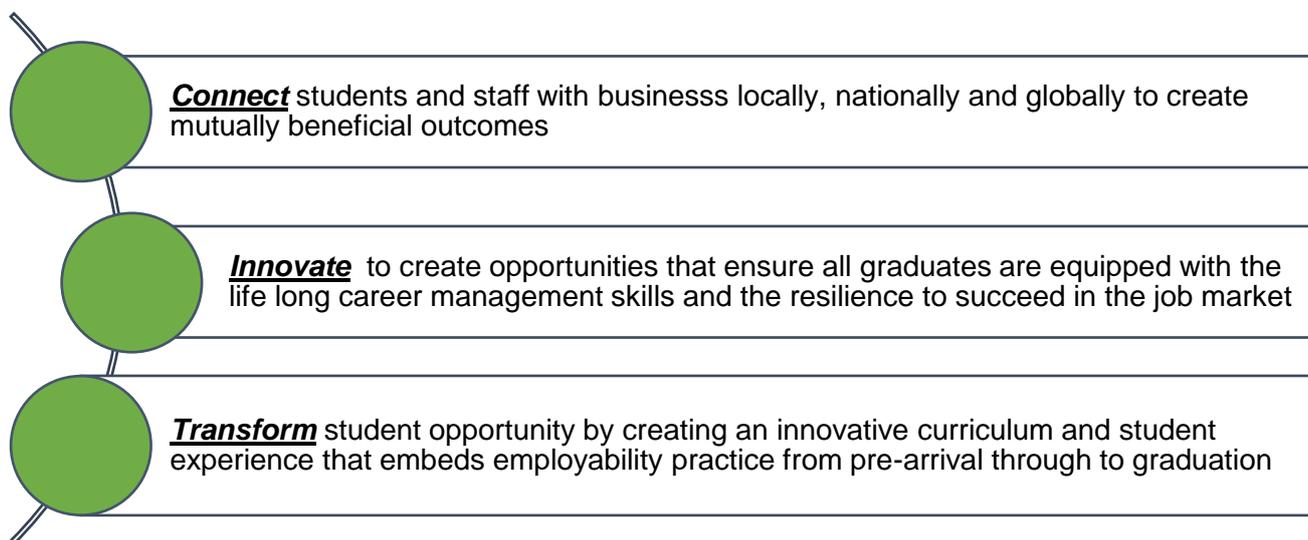
The strategy uses the general term '**business**' to cover all forms and sizes of employer or opportunity provider including private, public and third sector organisations, charities and volunteer groups.

2. Ambition of the Strategy

The University of Stirling's Employability Strategy 2017 - 2021 is clear in its ambition to:

“Develop aspirational students* and graduates with lifelong employability skills who can compete successfully in a competitive global economy”

Drawing on the University Strategic Plan the Employability Strategy will seek to:



External drivers and research have shifted in the last five years to shape this strategy.¹ Trends in employment, skills and workforce strategy place an increasing emphasis on the need for relevant experience, leadership and change skills, interpretation of big data, as well as social and collaboration skills.² As a result the University, in its Strategic Plan, has identified a KPI of increasing the proportion of leavers entering graduate level jobs to **85%**.³ The latest HESA figures show that the total percentage of Stirling leavers in professional-level occupations sits at 77.7%. In addition, the success of the Employability Strategy will be measured by KPIs linked to postgraduate experience and outcomes, and the University's ability to build and enhance its reputation with business.

Internally, the new strategy will connect to and reflect other key University drivers such as learning and teaching quality enhancement, internationalisation, research, innovation and enterprise.

3. Objectives of the Strategy

The following objectives outline how this ambition will result in tangible progress for students, staff and business.

¹ High Fliers (2015) The Graduate Market in 2015. London, www.highfliers.co.uk

² World Economic Forum (2016). The Future of Jobs, Workforce Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Geneva. www.weforum.org (accessed February 2016)

³ University of Stirling Strategic Plan 2016 – 2021 <http://www.stir.ac.uk/about/our-strategy/>

3.1 Our students will have the opportunity to apply, through a variety of approaches, their knowledge, skills and attributes to work related and work based situations, and both students and staff will be networked with business.

This will result in the following measurable outcomes:

- Students that can confidently and strategically network with business and alumni locally, nationally and globally
- Students that will understand and be knowledgeable about the labour market locally, nationally and globally
- Students that can apply their academic learning and personal experience to work-based and work-related situations, and will improve their understanding and articulation of how their learning and development applies to the world of work
- Staff with an expanded network of alumni, business and labour market information relevant to their discipline and role

We will achieve this by:

- Increasing the opportunities for work based or work related learning experiences within academic programmes
- Increasing the opportunities at under and post graduate level for work based dissertations and for knowledge exchange
- Increasing the number of academic areas with an Advisory Board
- Growing extracurricular work experience, volunteering and internship opportunities
- Increasing the number of students with an Alumni Mentor
- Developing an indicator tool to measure on an annual basis levels student career thinking and their levels of business engagement

We will measure this by:

- Tracking improvement in student capacity to network through student feedback in relevant surveys
- Measuring student engagement in personal career planning activity, in the context of lifelong learning, through new indicators of career thinking recorded in the annual enrolment process
- Measuring student capacity to apply their academic learning to the world of work through module and survey feedback
- Tracking institutional growth in impactful business engagement through a business engagement survey

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

By 2021 all taught programmes will include work based and/or work related learning

3.2 Our students will successfully manage their employability development from pre-arrival to transition into a positive destination

This will result in the following measurable outcomes:

- Students that can identify and articulate their competencies and skills
- Students that are equipped to identify and pursue the right option for them in terms of graduate work, study, enterprise or career transition
- Students that are equipped with career management skills to succeed long term in their professional life in line with the Stirling Graduate Attribute “professional and personally effective”
- Students that are engaged in their employability and personal development journey, and this is recognised, where appropriate, through award of academic credit

We will achieve this by:

- Embedding the Stirling Graduate Attributes in the undergraduate curriculum and co-curriculum
- Developing a set of postgraduate (TPG and RPG) specific graduate attributes and embedding in the curriculum and co-curriculum
- Increasing the student uptake on the My Stirling Award
- Embedding careers education, information, advice and guidance in the curriculum
- Developing a Personal Development Framework that is compulsory for all undergraduates and postgraduates
- Developing a relevant question(s) on employability for postgraduate research students in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey for 2017-18

We will measure this by:

- Tracking the embeddedness of Stirling Graduate Attributes through curriculum mapping and review
- Measuring student engagement in personal career planning activity through new indicators of career thinking, in the context of lifelong learning, recorded in the annual enrolment process
- Tracking student’s perception of their preparedness for the transition in and out of university through relevant national surveys, including the National Student Survey, the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

The University of Stirling will have a minimum rate of 85% graduate level employment for undergraduates and postgraduates

3.3 Our Staff will further develop and embed innovative employability practice in the curriculum and co-curriculum

This will result in the following measurable outcomes:

- Staff will increase their connections with business and work in partnership with the Careers and Employability Service
- Faculties, supported by the Careers and Employability Service, will map, plan, design and monitor all components of employability development throughout the curriculum so that all programmes include business engagement; work-based and work-related learning; reflective practice and career management skills
- Staff will increase their confidence in developing all components of employability practice and personal development planning within the curriculum and co-curriculum with support, resources and advice from the Careers and Employability Service

We will achieve this by:

- Growing all forms of business engagement in the curriculum
- Developing annual Employability Development Plans with faculties and the Graduate School
- Academic and Professional Services staff working in partnership to embed career management skills through all programmes
- Delivering staff development on all aspects of embedding employability in the curriculum

We will measure this by:

- Measuring the growth and balance of employability in the curriculum through curriculum mapping and review
- Reviewing staff confidence in delivering employability in the curriculum through subject reviews and a staff survey
- Reviewing the growth of business engagement in the curriculum through data gathered from our employability system and curriculum support tools

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The University of Stirling will improve the scores on the relevant National Student Survey rankings questions on employability to 85% (Question B13)

The University of Stirling will improve the scores on the relevant Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey questions on employability to 85% (Question 16)

3.4 Business will pro-actively seek to recruit our students and graduates

This will result in the following measurable outcomes:

- Businesses of all sizes and sectors (local, national and global) will view Stirling as an institution of choice for engagement and recruitment purposes
- Businesses will engage with a greater number of students and staff across the curriculum and co-curriculum
- Businesses will recognise the added value and impact that Stirling students bring to their organisation
- There will be increased engagement from businesses across the University

We will achieve this by:

- Developing an institutional Business Engagement Plan and Corporate Engagement Group to manage, monitor and develop business engagement
- Creating a clear infrastructure in each faculty to engage with and respond to business effectively
- The Careers and Employability Service supporting faculties in their business engagement work to identify and target suitable companies and organisations
- The Careers and Employability Service increasing its engagement with business to grow graduate, internships and placement opportunities

We will measure this by:

- Tracking the growth of business engagement across the University
- Tracking and monitoring feedback on the contribution and positive impact students are making on local, national and global businesses through a business survey
- Monitoring the increase of vacancies, internships and other forms of work-related engagement

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

The University of Stirling will increase its ranking in the QS World University Rankings Survey for reputation in business engagement to be in the top 200