



University of the  
Highlands and Islands  
Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd  
agus nan Eilean

# DARING TO BE DIFFERENT

Strategic Plan 2021-2025



# OUR APPROACH

## The University of the Highlands and Islands is a new, progressive and innovative university.

We are a regionally focused partnership of independent colleges and research institutions covering the largest geographical area of any campus-based university or college in the UK. We have the largest student body in Scotland, with over 35,000 studying with us each year, and we contribute £560 million annually to the region, indirectly supporting 6,200 jobs. As a multiplier effect, the university puts back £4 for every £1 spent into the economies of the Highlands and Islands, Moray and Perthshire.

This strategic plan represents the start of our third chapter. The university partnership is at a critical point in its history; we are operating in an intensely competitive and dynamic higher education and research environment, we are experiencing challenges in further education delivery, and we face an uncertain future with COVID-19.

Our university's aspirations extend beyond the place-based education we have in our regions and communities and embrace a 'daring to be different' ethos. This ethos will harness our energy and set new ambitions in our areas of strength, namely: tertiary education, research impact, enterprise and engagement.

The Daring to be Different strategic plan signals a shift in thinking, one for which our partnership is well prepared, and sets an ambition of becoming more engaged with our communities and more enterprising in our activity.

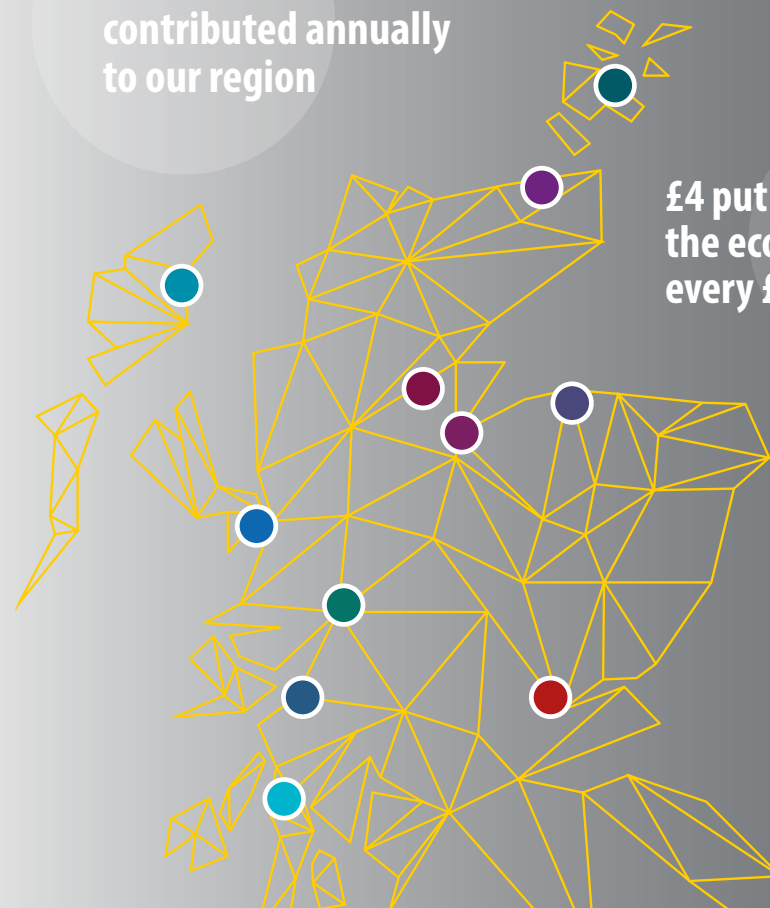
**Professor Todd Walker**  
Principal and Vice-Chancellor  
University of the Highlands and Islands

Scotland's largest student community  
10k higher education and  
25k further education



£560 million  
contributed annually  
to our region

£4 put back into  
the economy for  
every £1 spent



# OUR DIFFERENCE

## All-inclusive university

We are proud to be a different type of university. A university of today for the world of tomorrow. A university that offers the full range of further and higher education qualifications from access level to PhD. Where students can start where they need to and progress as far as they want at a pace that is right for them: all within the same institution. The future world of work will require us to be constantly learning, so whatever the stage of life or current qualification, we provide everyone with the opportunity to keep their skills relevant and up to date.

## Home of connected learning

We take the best of our growing academic reputation, world-class research and our proud history of vocational training to join the world of learning to the world of work. We involve industry experts to ensure our courses teach the skills employers are looking for and match these to our students' ambitions. Our blended learning approach has connected our student community here and across the world for over 20 years.

## A region of world-class research quality

All across our region we have centres of excellence and world-class thinking that are pushing the boundaries of academic and applied knowledge, where staff and students are playing a part in changing our region and the world.

## Supportive, caring and personal

Students are at the heart of what we do. We take time to help our students find their unique learner journey. We care passionately not just about our students and staff but also our region, its people, communities and future prosperity.

## In the world's most beautiful country

Experience a stunning and inspiring backdrop, heritage and culture and access Scotland's natural beauty.

Let the northern  
land shine

' Though the tides  
brush out our ripples  
in the sand,  
the northern land  
again will shine  
with the aurora  
dancing above our  
thought '

'Let the Northern Land Shine' (2011) Dr Meg Bateman's evocative work brings to life the mission of the university, and its place in one of the most beautiful and diverse parts of the world.

# OUR FRAMEWORK

Our strategic and planning framework identifies areas of improvements around a common set of shared values. The framework takes account of the current state and compares it to a desired state. It implies that the university partnership will be going through an organisational change aligned with an agreed overarching strategy and vision. It captures our intent to see students grow and succeed whatever the stage of their learner journey.

<b>MISSION</b>	To have a transformational impact on the prospects of our region, its economy, its people and its communities			
<b>VISION</b>	To become a connected, streamlined and sustainable university			
<b>BRAND STORY</b>	<i>A university of today for the world of tomorrow</i>			
<b>CORE VALUES</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>Openness</b>	<b>Respect</b>	<b>Excellence</b>
<b>STAKEHOLDERS</b>	Staff   Students   Alumni   Business   Government   Community   Industry			
<b>STRATEGIC PILLARS</b>	<b>Tertiary education</b>	<b>Research Impact</b>	<b>Enterprise</b>	<b>Engagement</b>
	We will deliver a high-quality connected curriculum built on personalising the learner journey with more content, to more people, through more channels	We will enhance our research impact, ensuring it is internationally ranked, industry linked and world leading	We will embrace an entrepreneurial spirit based on strong economic and commercial growth, resulting in a socially responsible and well managed enterprise	We will be a connected organisation that pursues engagement with the people and the communities in which we work, always striving for mutual benefit
<b>ENABLING THEMES</b>	Equality and Inclusion   Gaelic Language   Climate Change			
<b>OPERATIONAL PLANS</b>	Academic Plan Student Recruitment Plan	Research Plan Knowledge Exchange Plan	Sustainability Plan Digital Enhancement Plan	Alumni and Advancement Plan Engagement Plan
<b>ENABLING PLANS</b>	International Plan • People and Culture Plan • Island Plan • Gaelic Language Plan • Highlands and Islands Students' Association Student Partnership Agreement			



# OUR FRAMEWORK EXPLAINED

## Our core values

Our values sit at the centre of our strategic planning framework. They represent the core beliefs upon which the university is based and reflect how we operate. We hold the institution and ourselves accountable to these values.

<b>Collaboration</b>	We value people working willingly and actively together on common tasks because we seek to be a more connected organisation.
<b>Openness</b>	We value an environment in which colleagues and students share ideas and communicate clearly. We aim to be approachable and encourage others to contribute and speak up and we ensure others feel their contribution is valued.
<b>Respect</b>	We value others in the workplace, are mindful of each other's capabilities, perspectives and backgrounds, and are thoughtful about our impact on others.
<b>Excellence</b>	We value a sense of purpose in our work by taking responsibility in our performance and behaviour, and we celebrate collectively in our achievements and those of our students and graduates.

## Our strategic pillars

AIMS	
<b>Tertiary Education</b>	To deliver a high-quality connected curriculum built on personalising the learner journey with more content, to more people, through more channels.
<b>Research Impact</b>	To enhance our research impact, ensuring it is internationally ranked, industry linked and world leading.
<b>Enterprise</b>	To embrace an entrepreneurial spirit based on strong economic and commercial growth, resulting in a socially responsible and well managed enterprise.
<b>Engagement</b>	To be a connected organisation that pursues engagement with the people and the communities in which we work, always striving for mutual benefit.

## Our goals

	Goals	Outcomes by 2025 <sup>1</sup>	Measures <sup>1</sup>
<b>Tertiary Education</b>	To increase our reputation and reach through our distinctive connected curriculum, innovative delivery, student experience and success.	<p>Become a destination of choice for new learners.</p> <p>Recruit more students from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>Attract more international students.</p> <p>Produce confident and enterprising graduates.</p> <p>Provide a curriculum centred on our students' needs and focused on their learning journey.</p>	<p>Student numbers</p> <p>Student satisfaction</p> <p>Student success</p> <p>Student employability</p>
<b>Research Impact</b>	To increase our national and international standard of research and broaden our fields of research.	<p>Elevate further our research reputation, ensuring it is internationally ranked, industry linked and world leading.</p> <p>Be known for our strong and vibrant research environment for students and staff.</p> <p>Broaden the fields of research, collaboratively and recognising emerging areas of research strength.</p> <p>Become a partner of choice in national and global collaborations.</p>	<p>REF performance</p> <p>Research student numbers and success</p> <p>Research and knowledge exchange (KE) income</p> <p>Research and KE partnerships and projects</p>
<b>Enterprise</b>	To streamline our business model to one that is sustainable and socially responsible.	<p>Become a sustainable organisation.</p> <p>Demonstrate strong economic and commercial growth.</p> <p>Operate as a socially responsible and well managed enterprise.</p> <p>Attract and retain talented staff.</p>	<p>Financial sustainability</p> <p>Climate change/net zero contribution</p> <p>Staff profile</p>
<b>Engagement</b>	To be recognised externally as an engaged and connected university.	<p>Receive formal acknowledgment of our engagement strategy.</p> <p>Be known as an engaged university.</p> <p>Be a key contributor to talent retention and attraction in our region.</p> <p>Be a driver of regional economic growth and social recovery.</p>	<p>Key strategic partnerships</p> <p>Alumni network</p> <p>Graduate outcomes</p>

<sup>1</sup>The outcome and measures are illustrative and will be developed through the operational plans

# OUR PLANS

The strategic pillars of the university (T.R.E.E.) are supported by a number of annually reviewed operational and enabling plans. Each plan will be designed with a common format - objectives, actions and measures. Each plan will be linked to:

<b>Objectives</b>	A set of objectives required to meet the strategic aims, goals and outcomes of the pillars
<b>Actions</b>	A course of actions required to meet the objectives
<b>Measures</b>	A set of measurable endpoints that define the completion of the action
<b>Responsibilities</b>	An accountable person or committee

The university will have the following operational and enabling plans:

	<b>Tertiary Education</b>	<b>Research Impact</b>	<b>Enterprise</b>	<b>Engagement</b>
<b>OPERATIONAL PLANS</b>	Academic Plan	Research Plan	Sustainability Plan	Alumni and Advancement Plan
	Student Recruitment Plan	Knowledge Exchange Plan	Digital Enhancement Plan	Engagement Plan
<b>ENABLING PLANS</b>	International Plan • People and Culture Plan • Island Plan • Gaelic Language Plan Highlands and Islands Students' Association Student Partnership Agreement			





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Published by the University of the Highlands and Islands, a limited company registered in Scotland No.148203. Registered Scottish Charity No. SC022228. Registered office: 12b Ness Walk, Inverness, IV3 5SQ, Scotland.

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