

Forward thinking. And doing

Our Strategy (2021 – 2024)

Library
Learning
Centre
Entrance





FOREWORD

► Professor G.Q. Max Lu AO DL FEng FAA FTSE President and Vice-Chancellor

When I arrived at the University of Surrey in 2016, I set out an ambitious strategy designed to grow our reputation as a leading global university building on our many achievements since we were established in 1966 by Royal Charter. Since that time, we have achieved many great things, but the world around us has changed dramatically. In the last two years, the impact of Brexit, the global pandemic and geopolitical changes have been widely felt across the economy and society. In addition to these macro socio-economic challenges, the Higher Education sector has also faced the pressures of a significant demographic dip in the number of 18-year olds in the population and uncertainty with funding due to the Augar review of post-18 education and

funding. Operating through these challenging times has shown **how agile, responsive, and committed** we are as an institution and these strengths bode well for our future success.

As society emerges from the implications of the global pandemic, we will focus on building the foundations for a better future. We will create an environment where our community comes together as one to educate and develop the future leaders and citizens that will make the world a better place. At the same time, we will be creating new knowledge, sharing our ideas and innovating to contribute to society in collaboration with our stakeholders and partners around the world.

This strategy refresh extends our existing *The Surrey Advantage* strategy to 2024 to bridge the University's ambitions from where we were pre-pandemic, through the national and international recovery period, to build a strong platform from which we can aspire to even greater achievements in the future.

CONTEXT: A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

- Increased demand for Higher Education, driven by a demographic uplift
- Government focus on post-pandemic recovery, research and development and innovation
- Changing geopolitical context and Brexit
- Increase in economic internationalisation
- Grand challenges of net zero, climate change and protecting nature
- Rapid uptick in the application of digital tools to education
- Transformation of pedagogy — the method and practice of teaching
- Growing opportunity to expand the University's reach off campus.



MISSION

The University of Surrey provides excellent education, and advances and disseminates knowledge.

The University transforms lives and shapes the world for a better future by partnering with students, governments, businesses, alumni and local communities.

The University delivers social and economic impacts through research and innovation, together providing solutions to global challenges.

VISION

The University of Surrey will be a leading global university.

We will be renowned for the outstanding quality and impact of our graduates and research, as well as our collective contributions to society.

We will build on our distinctive heritage of practice-based learning and excellent student experience, and embrace our future by focusing on digital transformation.





VALUES

- **Inclusion:** to value everyone in our community
- **Inspiration:** to find it in ourselves and each other
- **Innovation:** to work together to make tomorrow better than yesterday
- **Integrity:** to do the right thing, individually and collectively.

OUR AMBITION AND GOALS

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To be a leading global university renowned for the outstanding quality and impact of its graduates, research, and innovation, together making great contributions to society.

”

To deliver our mission, we developed a challenging strategy with five broad goals prior to the pandemic. These long-term goals will remain unchanged, but the roadmap to reach them has been revised to reflect the changing external context.

We will have achieved our ambitions when we have become:

- A global leader in higher education, a destination of choice for higher learning in the UK and internationally, with outstanding employment outcomes.
- A leading research and innovation institution with talented staff, students and postgraduate researchers committed to research excellence and to benefitting the economy, society, and the environment.
- An engaged and connected university which is the intellectual home for staff, students, alumni, supporters and the local community, and aware of its impact.
- A preferred partner for government, business, industry, and other universities in creating technological solutions, digital transformation and policy innovation.
- A financially astute and sustainable institution with diverse funding support, including philanthropy.

PRIORITIES

Our priorities for the next three years address the core of what we do:

▶ Drive student experience

Students are at the heart of our University and we will deliver an excellent student experience for all students regardless of background.

Surrey is renowned for enabling our students to realise their potential. We will continue to push the boundaries of pedagogy, ensuring our students experience a research-led education delivered by engaged academic staff using technology for greater flexibility to facilitate learning. We will be relentless in our pursuit of improvements to the overall student journey.

Our aim is to empower our students to be responsible for their Surrey journey. We will support our students to achieve their potential and prepare them to thrive throughout and beyond university. We will do this by working in partnership with students to build a strong Surrey community, fostering pride and belonging and championing diversity, inclusivity, and togetherness. We will listen to, work with and support our students to help them succeed, identifying and improving support services and the necessary infrastructure for a truly joined up experience.

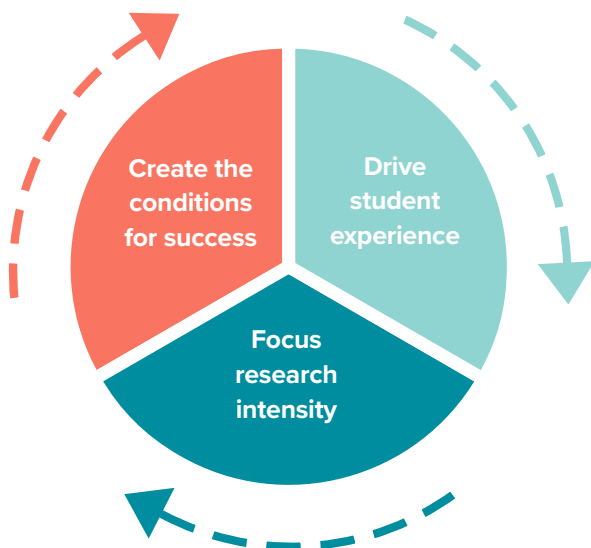
▶ Focus research intensity

We will focus our resources and support around our existing and emerging critical masses of excellence. We will enhance excellence and build scale, bringing together disciplinary strengths from across the University to share ideas and address the challenges of our time. New pan-University institutes will serve as flagships of cross-disciplinary research concentration from which to elevate our global impact and visibility. We will start upscaling and broadening our excellent innovation ecosystem to grow our innovation activity within our academic community, through educating, stimulating, and facilitating. We will continue to bring the research and education missions of the University ever closer together, building on the synergies already achieved by individual teachers and researchers. We will align our research and innovation support to be researcher-centric, 'can-do', digital and integrated which will help our researchers improve their effectiveness, and continue to be extraordinary collaborators, with each other and our partners around the world.

▶ Create the conditions for success

We will foster talent and create an environment where all our staff, students and postgraduate researchers are empowered and supported to flourish, valuing each and every contribution.

We have redesigned our resource allocation model and our support processes to reward excellence, enable growth, and to create more capacity for the academic mission. We will use technology to enhance our systems and simplify processes, putting our community at the heart of everything we do, building Surrey as the place to start and grow a career for all our staff – support and academic alike. The success of our strategy will be underpinned by the quality, energy and commitment of our staff, supported by a strong and inclusive culture in an environment where all members of our community can bring their whole selves, flourish and fulfil their full potential.





EDUCATION

▶ AMBITION

We will create the conditions for our students, at every level of study and from all backgrounds, to:

- Flourish in, draw inspiration from, and contribute to our culturally diverse and dynamic academic community.
- Gain the excellent critical, analytic, creative, digital, and practical capabilities which are valued by employers and form the basis for professional achievements which will shape a more sustainable future for society.

- Develop the personal attributes – including knowledge, opinions, independence, networks, and self-confidence – which will equip them for fulfilling lives and careers.

Our graduates will be exceptional and highly sought-after: they will think critically and differently, and make a real impact on society. Our teaching and learning environment will be student-centred and enriching, with an emphasis on practice-based learning.

MISSION

We provide talented and motivated students from all backgrounds, and of all nationalities, with an outstanding education. We draw on our excellent research and partnerships to equip students with the knowledge, professional skills, and personal qualities to achieve their ambitions.

We will be leaders in developing, embedding, and disseminating effective and innovative practices

OBJECTIVES

- We will ensure all of our programmes are designed to enable all of our students to achieve the core graduate attributes that are central to the 'Surrey Advantage'.
- We will support students from all backgrounds with high academic potential to join our programmes, and create the conditions for all of our students to realise their goals.
- We will be leaders in developing, embedding, and disseminating effective and innovative practices in relation to all aspects of pedagogy across our programmes.
- We will develop innovative, learning environments on and off campus, building on the hybrid education model.
- We will continue to lead in our academic support for employability, professional development and professional training.



KEY ACTIVITIES TO DELIVER

Embed the core graduate attributes into all programmes

We will embed our learner-centric curriculum design across all programmes so that, alongside subject knowledge and skills, our students will experience: professionally-focused learning underpinned by foundational scholarship that nurtures career-ready graduates; a diverse international and cultural environment at the heart of the learning experience; opportunities to contribute to a global, networked digital society; unique opportunities to develop as future leaders in sustainable thinking; and supported development to become independent and resourceful learners.

Our curriculum design will involve strong staff-student partnerships throughout the process, and will link with our Research and Innovation strategy, to ensure that our teaching is both student-focused, and research-informed. Through our approach to curriculum design, we believe all of our students will secure the 'Surrey Advantage' that sets them apart from other graduates. The synergistic combination of the attributes of global and cultural intelligence, digital capabilities, knowledge and skills, sustainability, employability and resilience and resourcefulness is what secures the distinctive 'Surrey Advantage'.

▶ Learning analytics and student success

We will use analytics to share insights with our student community and enable early intervention support where it is most needed using a dedicated support team to proactively work to improve retention and success for students across the University. Initially we will draw together, and share, real-time data that provides early warnings both helping students to help themselves, and also ensuring targeted support is offered. As trends in success and risk become clearer, we will be better placed to use predictive analytics to inform support and interventions. This work will link with the bold targets in our Access and Participation plan to maximise student success and improve progression across our entire student community.

▶ Innovative learning environments

We will build on the hybrid education model developed during the pandemic to ensure that we continue to provide a modern virtual learning environment for future generations, taking advantage of the flexibility in learning through the growth of 'Education on Demand'. We will seek to maximise the use of technology to assist in the provision of learning, through learning capture/streaming, virtual and augmented learning, and technology and social learning spaces for collaboration and student innovation. This will involve improvement and change to some of our teaching spaces and social learning spaces to ensure they are both innovative, and appropriate, for this hybrid approach.



▶ Measures of success (2024)

There are many ways in which we will analyse the success of our objectives but these three top level measures in particular enable us to evaluate the quality of our education through the equitable attainment of our students, their perception of their education and their propensity to complete their studies.

Awarding gap

<6%

(Awarding gap is to be less than 6% between White and Black students)

Student satisfaction

≥Top quartile

(Assessment and feedback, teaching on my course, academic support)

Retention

Top quartile with 0% gap POLAR 5-1)

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

› AMBITION

Our ambition is to empower our students to take ownership of their Surrey journey, enabling them to achieve lifelong success.

› MISSION

Our mission is to transform lives. We will support our students to achieve their potential and prepare them to thrive throughout and beyond university.

› OBJECTIVES

- We will help our students succeed – developing a broader employability offer for students, building on our existing successful professional training programme, supplementing the academic delivery.
- We will listen to our students – working proactively and in partnership to prioritise and clearly communicate joint initiatives which will positively shape the student experience.
- We will work with our students – improving support – especially at key periods of transition – to enable student successes throughout their university life.
- We will support our students – providing access to appropriate, high-quality, caring and coordinated support services to all students, championing inclusivity and growing independence.



› KEY ACTIVITIES TO DELIVER

Employability head start

We will build a broader employability offer for our students to enable them to become rounded and resilient graduates and to empower them to find career success. We will do this by: embedding employability in the curriculum and strengthening the existing Professional Training placement year and other placement programmes; widening opportunities for work experience through

summer and graduate internships; increasing the employment of graduates in roles at the University; instilling a lifelong learning ethos for long-term career resilience; growing the uptake of ‘SurreyConnects’, the place for alumni-student networking and mentoring; and reflecting the needs of future employers in our employability offer.

Seamless student journey

We will ensure a seamless experience for all our students from pre-arrival to post-graduation.

We will conduct a review of the student journey to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement in the support we provide to students, including our postgraduate researchers. Our approach will identify and deliver targeted initiatives for certain student groups and will seek to widen participation and inclusivity across the journey. We will refine our case-coordinating approach to student support and develop the necessary infrastructure for a joined-up experience, ensuring access to support is consistent, flexible and connected. This will be supported through the co-creation of processes, timelines, and structures, embedding the staff-student partnership manifesto and will be complemented by the services delivered through the Students' Union.

Through these activities we will build a Surrey community for all our staff, students and alumni that fosters pride and belonging and champions diversity, inclusivity and togetherness.

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Measures of success (2024)

There are many ways in which we will analyse the success of our objectives, but these three top level measures enable us to see that we are supporting our students to succeed, that we are listening and working with them to optimise their experience, and that we are creating an inclusive community supporting all students in their journey.

Highly-skilled graduate employability

Top decile with less than 1% gap between White and Black students

Student Voice (NSS)

Top quartile

Learning Community (NSS)

Top quartile

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

► AMBITION

Our ambition is to be:

- A global leader in higher education research and innovation and a destination of choice for researchers, including postgraduate research students, in the UK and internationally.
- A leading research institution with talented staff and students committed to research and innovation excellence and to benefitting the economy, society and the environment.
- A preferred partner for government, business, industry and other universities in creating knowledge, technological solutions, digital transformation and policy innovation.
- An engaged and connected university which is the intellectual home for alumni, supporters, and the local community.

► MISSION

Our mission is to nurture and grow our talented and dedicated pool of researchers whose practice is founded on a values-based culture of excellence.

We need academics who can conduct research at the leading edge, who are forward-thinking, who provide an exceptional experience for our research students and partners, and who value and generate innovation outcomes. They are the agents for the ‘Surrey Advantage’, culminating in the premium that each and every student or partner gains by choosing us as the place to complete postgraduate research or to collaborate.


► OBJECTIVES

- **We will enhance our research excellence and sustainably grow our research scale** through balanced resourcing and concentration of activity.
- **We will ensure our research and teaching produce synergy, complementarity, and efficiency** for the benefit of our researchers, teachers and students.
- **We will contribute greater societal benefit** by deepening the culture of innovation, and enhancing our impact, knowledge exchange, and community engagement.
- **We will make research support “researcher-centric”** and continue to enhance our research infrastructure with a focus on data.



▶ KEY ACTIVITIES TO DELIVER

Build stronger concentrations in interdisciplinary research and innovation – creating pan-University institutes. We will enhance our research excellence by developing and extending our critical mass areas of research, underpinned by strategic investments. We will establish pan-University research institutes in people-centred artificial intelligence and sustainability which will bring together diverse groups of researchers looking to solve global challenges and complex problems. The institutes will be a vehicle for external collaboration which will create a globally-visible footprint and reputation. Research across the University will also be supported by the development of a university-wide data governance structure and master plan.



We will ensure we maximise the opportunity our already established innovation ecosystem creates for us.

▶ Synergise research and teaching

We will ensure our teaching and research is synergistic. We will recognise the coupling of teaching and research in all that we do. We will engage all our researchers in teaching through culture and practice. We will ensure our recruitment and promotion processes reflect the duality of our mission, and we will develop opportunities for students to join research centres, and for postgraduate researchers to develop teaching practice.

▶ Scale innovation to grow societal impact

We will scale-up activities to involve greater numbers of staff, students and postgraduate researchers in impact and innovation. We will ensure we maximise the opportunity our already established innovation ecosystem creates for us. We will implement a new institutional plan for supporting knowledge exchange, impact and business, third sector, government and public engagement in research and innovation in order to generate demonstrable societal impact from increased involvement in innovation activities.



Digital enablement will be driven through implementation of a digital research information system supported by a researcher one-stop shop approach to information and signposting.

➤ Strengthen our support and infrastructure for our researchers

We will improve support for our research activities by establishing better and more researcher-centric support systems. Digital enablement will be driven through implementation of a digital research information system supported by a researcher one-stop shop approach to information and signposting. We will also ensure inclusive mentoring and career development schemes are in place to support our research staff and postgraduate researchers through different stages of their career.

➤ Measures of success (2024)

There are many ways in which we will analyse the success of our objectives, but these three top level measures enable us to see that we are growing our research activity and quality, and continuing to achieve an outstanding level of impact through our engagement with business and commercialisation activities.

Research Income

Be on track to exceed £50m pa

Research Excellence Framework

Be on track for a top 30 outcome in 2027

Knowledge Excellence Framework

Working with Business: top 10% per capita
IP and Commercialisation: top 10% per capita

CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

► AMBITION

Our ambition is to create the conditions that enable all our colleagues to succeed in their endeavours, with all colleagues having pride in the University and their contribution to its success.

► MISSION

Our mission is:

- To create a fulfilling, appropriately-resourced environment and culture that supports all.
- To lead with intent, supporting and developing teams to deliver our goals.
- To deliver customer-centric, integrated, consistent and cost-effective processes, enabling responsible risk taking and innovation.
- To be accountable and track performance to planned improvements.

► OBJECTIVES

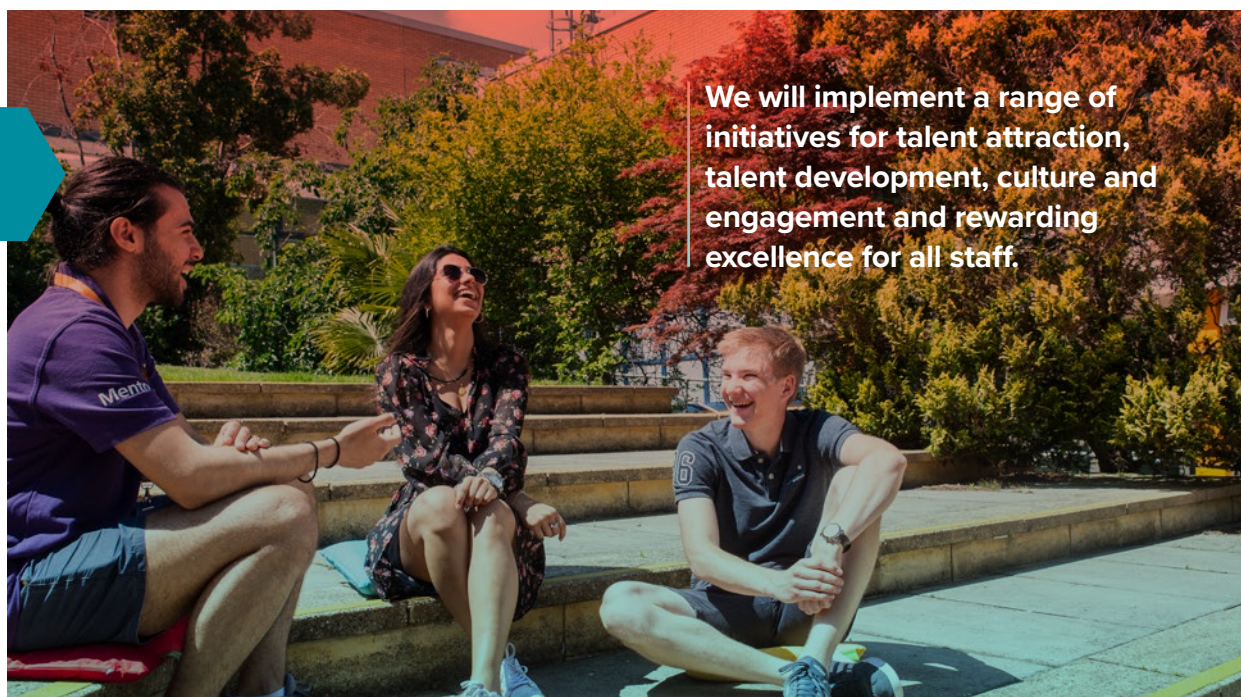
- We will enhance Surrey as a place to start and grow a career by creating a fulfilling environment where wellbeing is championed, and people can achieve their potential.
- We will build engaged and equipped teams through inspiring, inclusive leadership, creating a culture of collaboration, trust and transparency where people are empowered to deliver and innovate to find solutions.
- We will build a Surrey community by working in partnership with staff and students to strengthen a community identity that fosters pride and belonging and champions diversity, inclusivity and togetherness.
- We will use our resource allocation model to reward and underpin success, enabling excellence to grow and develop.
- We will develop our effectiveness and efficiency to drive up capacity for the academic endeavour, through simplified support models, digitally-enabled processes and seamless delivery.



▶ KEY ACTIVITIES TO DELIVER

Make Surrey the place to start and grow a career

We will enhance Surrey as a place to start and grow a career by creating a fulfilling environment where diversity and wellbeing are championed and where everyone can achieve their potential. We will implement a range of initiatives for talent attraction, talent development, culture and engagement and rewarding excellence for all staff. Delivery of the strategy is also dependent on a level of organisational change and will require an intentional evolution of our culture and practice towards creating an environment of trust, flexibility, empowerment and incentivising collaboration.



We will implement a range of initiatives for talent attraction, talent development, culture and engagement and rewarding excellence for all staff.

▶ The Surrey community

We will deliver an environment where our staff, students and postgraduate researchers feel an integral part of the Surrey community, as evidenced by the innate sense of belonging they feel at the University, and the pride they therefore exhibit. We will ensure that all staff, students and postgraduate researchers know how they contribute to the wider university community. We will embrace a proactive approach to equality, diversity and inclusion to encourage all staff and students to appreciate and celebrate communities different to their own.

Fundamental to this will be enhanced and targeted communications with a new strategy ensuring staff and students are at the heart of delivery.

▶ Resource allocation

We will ensure high performance and success is rewarded, and growth is enabled. Our resource allocation model has been re-designed to enable a stronger alignment to need and opportunity in order to drive the academic endeavour, ensuring each academic department has the capacity to deliver an excellent student experience and meet its research and innovation objectives.

Professional services simplicity and digital enablement

We will drive evidence-based decisions and service improvements through digital enablement.

This starts with simplicity; removing unnecessary bureaucracy while seizing the significant opportunity to improve processes and remove duplication. We will lock in the resulting successes through digital enablement and automation, supporting innovation across administration. By extracting maximum impact with lean organisational design and clear value-for-money criteria we can invest in our strategy and continue to have a well-loved and well-cared for campus.



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Measures of success (2024)

There are many ways in which we will analyse the success of our objectives but these top level measures enable us to see that we are creating the conditions in which our staff are able to excel within a financially-sustainable model.

Staff engagement
70%

Underlying operating surplus
≥3.5% per annum

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

► AMBITION

We will advance education, research and innovation to transform lives and society through meaningful engagement with our many and diverse audiences.

► MISSION

We enable the University to sustain lifelong relationships with our audiences globally, to keep them engaged and informed so that together we can achieve our goals.

► OBJECTIVES

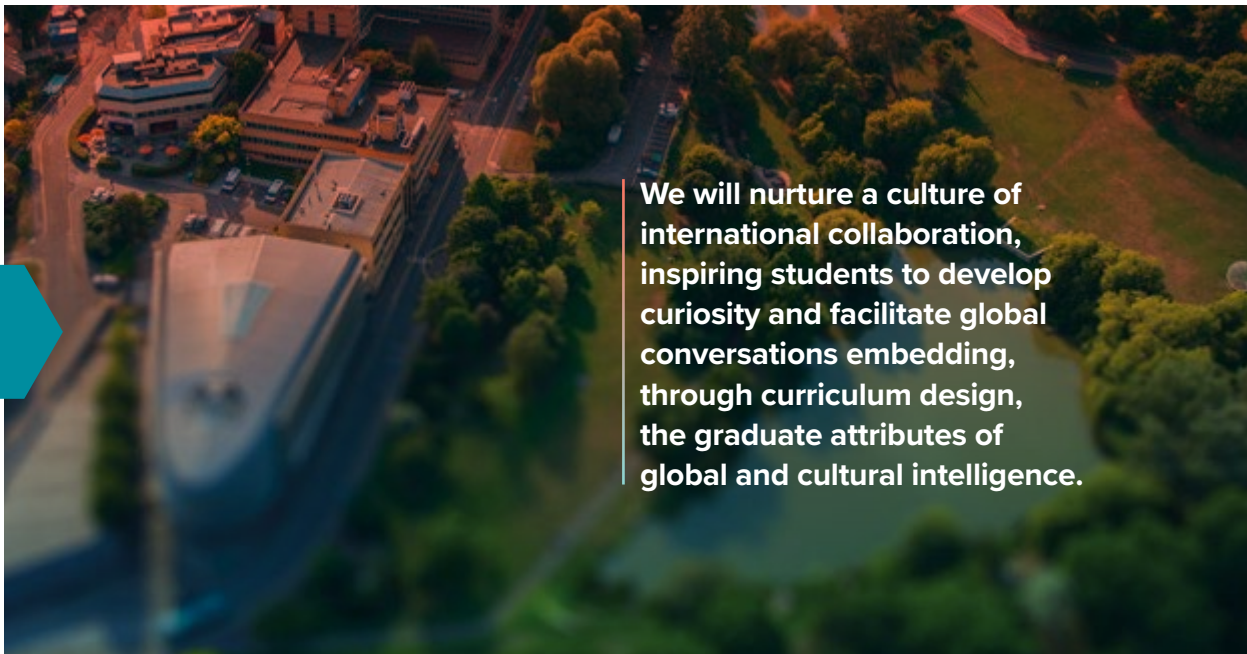
- **We will increase the participation of our students in international opportunities and expand the international dimension of the Surrey experience** by enabling access for underrepresented groups and broadening international mobility and other international engagement activities for all our students and postgraduate researchers.
- **We will develop new collaborative teaching and learning programmes**, which will harness innovative pedagogies and digital technologies. We will ensure that our programme portfolio remains attractive to a diverse international market, enabling growth of our international intake.
- **We will increase the global impact and profile of Surrey's research and innovation** by strengthening existing partnerships and by forming new international collaborations in line with our own strategic priorities and those of funding agencies.
- **We will explore strategic undergraduate and postgraduate transnational education (TNE) opportunities**, in alignment with the University's education and research and innovation strategies and growth aspirations.
- **We will strengthen our international profile and reputation** and increase recognition for our achievements by leveraging engagement from our international stakeholders, supporting our education and research goals, including increased international recruitment of staff, students and postgraduate researchers.



▶ KEY ACTIVITIES TO DELIVER

International Opportunities, Mobility and Collaborative Learning. We will provide students with unique international experiences and opportunities to develop skills and enhance their global experience and employability prospects. Working with strategic partners to deliver high-quality collaborative programmes and learning opportunities using innovative pedagogies and digital technology. To do this, we will strengthen strategic links with global partners to broaden the range of, and the modalities for, international mobility programmes available to Surrey students

and make Surrey a destination of choice for students from overseas partners. We will nurture a culture of international collaboration, inspiring students to develop curiosity and facilitate global conversations embedding, through curriculum design, the graduate attributes of global and cultural intelligence. We will continue to develop dual degree programmes at all levels and Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) programmes with partner universities to bring international experiences into our Surrey-based programmes.



We will nurture a culture of international collaboration, inspiring students to develop curiosity and facilitate global conversations embedding, through curriculum design, the graduate attributes of global and cultural intelligence.

▶ International research

We will increase the global impact and profile of Surrey's research.

We will enhance our strong record of international research collaborations, building on the successes of existing partnerships and networks, most notably the University Global Partnership Network (UGPN). The University has a strong reputation for international collaboration with more than half of its research publications having an international co-author. We will build on this strong performance by further strengthening our engagement with international funding agencies. We will develop exchanges of postgraduate researchers, early career researchers, and more senior researchers and build partnerships with governments, NGOs, and industrial partners worldwide. We will carefully select our partners ensuring alignment of values and mission.

We will support our researchers to access more sources and larger amounts of international funding, including Horizon Europe. With the UGPN and other partners, we will also focus on impactful research which addresses the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



► Strategic transnational education

We will identify and explore transnational education (TNE) opportunities in strategically important locations, and carefully consider appropriate business models to deliver Surrey programmes at scale and aligned with our education and research and innovation strategies and growth aspirations. This will enhance our potential for growth of international student numbers off-campus, through delivering Surrey programmes in-country.

► International reputation

We will strengthen our international profile and reputation and increase engagement from international stakeholders. Increased inbound and outbound mobility at all levels will increase recognition of the quality of our research and teaching. We will continue to enhance our international reputation by actively fostering cooperation with a broad range of stakeholders, partners and networks. Through engagement and partnership with international stakeholders, we will ensure that our teaching, research and outreach activities deliver greater impact.

► Measures of success (2024)

There are many ways in which we will analyse the success of our objectives, but these three top level measures enable us to see that we are supporting our continuation to grow our international outlook both in terms of education and research.

Publications with international collaborator

≥60%

Double participation in student mobility/ international opportunities

10%

Increase in PhD students on dual programmes

+25%



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