

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE BIRMINGHAM

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024



University College Birmingham
UCB

ACCREDITED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM



OUR MISSION, VALUES AND REPUTATION

Our 2021-2024 Strategic Plan sets an ambitious agenda for UCB's future that puts the communities and industries we serve at its heart.

This Plan provides an outline for the future direction of the University. It commits to a number of University-wide objectives, establishes how we will achieve them and how we will report and measure our progress.

We are building this Plan from a good position, but in a period of radical change for both Further and Higher Education. We continue to be mindful of our mission, to provide opportunity and access to all who have the potential to succeed in education. Having undertaken a vast overhaul of our estate over the last ten years, we are continuing to invest in our Teaching and Learning infrastructure, with digital technologies and innovative ways of learning that are universally accessible being a key priority. We also commit in the Plan to sustainable, socially responsible operations and to ensuring as outstanding a student experience as possible for each member of our varied student bodies.

»» OUR MISSION

To promote and provide the opportunity for participation in the learning process by those with the ambition and commitment to succeed and to maintain a learning community that meets the diverse needs of our students, the economy and society at large.

»» OUR CORE VALUES

- Our Teaching and Learning will always be industry-led, research-informed and vocational in nature.
- The Corporation is deeply committed to fundamental values of equality of opportunity, mutual respect, diversity, integrity and community.
- The Corporation governs the University in accordance with the OfS Public Interest Governance Principles and the Nolan Principles of Standards in Public Life.

»» OUR REPUTATION

The University is a specialist, globally-connected institution offering vocational education and training within a supportive learning community. There are extensive opportunities for educational progression, ranging from school-leavers and apprentices through to postgraduate students and adult learners.

We are dedicated to supporting our students and staff, and providing opportunities for personal and career development in a friendly, inclusive environment.

We are the strategic partner of choice for a wide range of employers and educational partners, reflecting a commitment to educational and training excellence, investment and financial stability.



TEACHING AND LEARNING PRIORITIES

We are committed to enhancing learning and teaching for all of our students at UCB and we are constantly challenging ourselves to innovate, inspire and share outstanding practice. Our approach to learning and teaching is informed by our desire to enhance student outcomes and satisfaction, but it is also about ensuring that our students are part of a collaborative, engaging and transformative learning environment.

WE WILL:

Design an industry informed, innovative, challenging and flexible curriculum that best prepares graduates for the industries we serve

HOW?

Establish newly formed Industry Liaison Groups for each curriculum area.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Improved student recruitment across a diverse range of programmes, with positive feedback on the level industry exposure, collected through Module Review.

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

- Supports the University's objectives in its efforts to comply with Condition B1 of our registration with the OfS

Continue to develop further, digital technologies that enhance learning in either the physical or virtual location

Deliver on the Digital Strategy, with its focus on ensuring all staff and students can make the most of the digital tools and opportunities.

Staff are supported to maintain excellent teaching and digital skills and to make full use of them in the curriculum.

The establishment and supported development of Digital Champions among the academic teams.

Provide outstanding, inspirational teaching that raises the aspirations of learners to achieve their full potential, whether that be further study or employment

Provide opportunities for staff to access relevant workplace settings to ensure our teaching and curriculum offer remains current.

Recruit teachers who are not just knowledgeable but also passionate about their subject. Provide forums to share best practice and encourage peer observations by way of, for example, Teaching Triads.

Use teachers and alumni as role models.

- Improved student satisfaction with regard to the quality of teaching
- Nominations from students for the Spotlight on Great Teaching Awards
- Teaching Excellence Framework
- The number of staff gaining HEA fellowship
- Becoming an Ofsted Outstanding provider

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

- Supports the University's objectives in its efforts to comply with Conditions B3 and B6 of our registration with the OfS

Provide state-of-the-art facilities and resources that foster a positive learning environment

Continuing our proud record of capital improvement with targeted investment in areas which will show tangible benefits to our students.

Reflected in Ofsted findings and in improved results in the Learning Resources and Community sections of the National Student Survey.



WE WILL:

Forge positive, collaborative relationships with industry professionals to enrich our students' learning experience and workplace opportunities

HOW?

Establish stronger working relationships with hired@UCB, academic teams and alumni.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Strong employer feedback that can help inform the development of our curriculum beyond 2024.

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

Supports the University's objectives in its efforts to comply with Conditions B1 and B3 of our registration with the OfS

Promote a culture of life-long learning and ambition

Show a genuine interest in our students' development and challenge them to succeed regardless of their starting point.

- Reduction in BAME attainment gap
- FE to HE progression data
- Improvement in continuation data

Encourage students to foster a sense of research, and to enable autonomous and independent learning to allow students to grow and develop, so that they can compete with advantage

Through the design of flexible and dynamic modes of research and evidence-based teaching. These will provide opportunities for student engagement and problem solving, leading to a vibrant learning culture.

Improved student satisfaction in the areas of Community and Student Voice.

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

Supports the University's objectives in its efforts to comply with Condition B5 of our registration with the OfS

WE WILL:

Provide a safe and supportive learning community that promotes respect and inclusivity

HOW?

Staff to lead by example. Provide a welcoming atmosphere both in and outside of the classroom.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Vibrant student forums with strong links to course-based student groups and protected characteristics societies.

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

Supports the University's objectives in its efforts to comply with Condition B2 of our registration with the OfS

Encourage and develop independent, resilient learners so that they may acquire an increased level of confidence

Acknowledge and recognise achievement. Let students know it is OK to make mistakes as a part of the learning process. We will use learner analytics to enable students to take control of their own learning.

Improved Destinations data for Higher Education students and reflected in the Personal Development judgement made by Ofsted.

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

Supports the University's objectives in its efforts to comply with Condition B2 of our registration with the OfS

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

We are committed to ensuring that all of our students have the best possible opportunities to benefit from a high-quality experience, in and outside the classroom. We want to remove barriers to participation and success, so that all of our students feel that they belong at UCB, and can achieve their full potential. To do this we will work closely with students, listening and responding to their needs. We will provide high-quality, accessible learning and support services to make sure students can thrive. And we will provide outstanding opportunities for students' self-development, though careers support, placements, extra-curricular activities, and academic enhancement. Our aim is to provide an individualised experience that accounts for the personal wellbeing of each student, while prioritising equality of opportunity, academic development and vocational experience.

WE WILL:

Ensure that students have an outstanding experience of studying at UCB



HOW?

We will listen closely to the diversity of student voices at UCB, through formal and informal mechanisms. We will seek ways to work in partnership with students so that we can create improvements that matter to them.



MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- NSS results and PTES
- TEF
- Module evaluation
- Progression
- Graduate Outcomes
- Course-based society membership

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

- Supports the University's objectives in its efforts to comply with Conditions B1, B4, B5 and B6 of our registration with the OfS

Provide high quality academic, pastoral and welfare support for all students when they need it most



We will develop our infrastructure and resources in order to support our students to succeed. We will ensure that our support services are clearly signposted, accessible to all students, and responsive to changes in student needs. We will ensure that students receive consistent and personalised support.



- Improve progression and retention
- Graduate Outcomes
- Tutorial uptake
- Feedback from academic and professional services

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

- Supports the University's objectives in its efforts to comply with Conditions B1 and B2 of our registration with the OfS

Embed high quality, meaningful work experience that enhances progression, achievement and opportunities for employment



Develop partnerships with employers and industry to enable students to gain access to contemporary knowledge and skills, so that our courses remain vibrant and relevant. We will make use of more innovative approaches to work experience so that all students have the opportunity to have a meaningful interaction with employers during their course.



- Increased volunteering
- Increased number of work placements
- Work experience
- Graduate employability
- LEO
- Number of courses offering mandatory work placement

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

- Supports the University's objectives in its efforts to comply with Condition B3 of our registration with the OfS



WE WILL:

Ensure that each student is given the opportunity to develop transferable skills, for personal and professional growth and self-development



HOW?

Students will be able to take advantage of in-class and extra-curricular opportunities to support them to develop personally, and to achieve their career goals. Alongside this, we will provide excellent careers advice and guidance in order for them to become work ready.



MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- Increased number of extra-curricular activities
- Graduate employability

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

- Supports the University's objectives in its efforts to comply with Condition B3 of our registration with the OfS

Enable students to achieve ambitious career aspirations, opportunities for progression or access to employment



We will embed relevant employability and entrepreneurial skills regardless of course, level and type of study. We will work with hired@UCB to provide the capability and capacity to meet the current and future needs of students and employers.



- Growth in placement, volunteering, student ambassadors and work experience opportunities
- Increased progression between levels of study (FE to HE, UG to PG)
- Ultimately, growth in students in graduate employment and further study

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

- Supports the University's objectives in its efforts to comply with Conditions A1, B3 and B4 of our registration with the OfS

Harness the talents and abilities of all students who can benefit and show the commitment to learning at UCB



Each student will benefit from an inclusive environment that celebrates each student's achievements, valuing diversity of experience, background culture and opportunity. We will work proactively to understand and remove barriers to students' success.



- WP and access stats
- Close attainment gap
- Achievement of APP targets

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

- Supports the University's objectives in its efforts to comply with Conditions A1 and B2 of our registration with the OfS



A GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

The University has substantial opportunities for growth across a number of areas internationally. These opportunities are particularly in regions attracted by the reintroduced post-study work visa, and for online, blended and distance learning across the globe. We can also do even more to ensure that all of our students receive an education that readies them for a globalised world, whether through exchanges, placements, or international experiences on campus. Working in partnership, whether with other educational institutions, government bodies, or agents, will be crucial to our continued success.

WE WILL:

Enhance our international student body and continue to grow our relationships across the globe

HOW?

- » Continue to increase the number of highly qualified international students on all programmes through enhanced marketing and recruitment, and an enhanced agent and representative network
- We will identify credible brand ambassadors to influence student choice and boost our reputation.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- » A more diversified international student body, with international student recruitment numbers steadily increasing year on year (2-5% growth per year), and an increased number of countries represented in our student body.
- » Identified agents, brand ambassadors and representatives, working within a clear agent reward framework.

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

- Supports the University's objectives in its efforts to comply with Condition D1 of our registration with the OfS
- Dependent on continued Tier 4 sponsor visa status, and government travel restrictions

Increase the number and depth of our international educational partnerships

- » Develop broad partnership agreements with our established partners, and articulation or progression agreements with new partners through increased visits, making use of contacts of staff across the institution.
- » Articulation and/or progression agreements with at least ten new institutions. Growth in number of students from established partners coming to study at UCB.

Develop more online and blended learning courses to enable students to study for a UCB degree from anywhere in the world

- » Work with an established online learning partner to develop new wholly online courses. For blended courses, develop from existing resources at speed to mitigate risks of disruptions to global travel.
- » Offer at least 5 programmes aimed at an international audience wholly online by 2021/22 academic year.

Open up innovative new ways for all our students to benefit from opportunities to gain an international perspective, whether through study or placement abroad, or through on-campus interactions

- » We will also work with partners and institutions inside and outside Europe to explore new teaching, progression and placement opportunities for our students.
- We will ensure that our international students are more visible on campus, running regular internationally-themed events, and an annual international festival.
- » Establish successful delivery of block programmes in France, Portugal and Croatia. An expanded portfolio of high quality international exchange and placement providers with a proven track record of excellence spread around the world.

ACCESS, EMPLOYABILITY AND MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS

First and foremost, our partnerships start with our students and are for the benefit of our students. This in turn provides the momentum and purpose for all of our partnerships so that we strive to enrich our local and regional communities, improve the life changes and experiences of our students' families and communities and drive our vocational programmes so that they deliver meaningful knowledge, skills and experiences for the future careers and life choices of all of our students.

In all partnerships, we will aim to be strategic, collaborative, coordinated and seek to draw out mutual benefits. Student input into the development of these relationships will be a priority in all instances.

WE WILL:

Co-create futures alongside our students so that they have choice, confidence and ambition for their future careers and life choices.

Strengthen the school and college pathways needed to ensure every young person finds their way

HOW?

Student access and recruitment through links with schools and colleges through partnership packages, agents, franchise partnerships, and articulations.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- Creation of a refreshed UCB partnership package for UK partners. Signing up of at least 10 new partners to the package.
- Progression or articulation agreements established with at least 20 UK institutions, generating at least 10 new students each.

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

- Supports the University's objectives in its efforts to comply with Condition A1 (Access) of our registration with the OfS

Build and refresh our curriculum and, linked to this, to provide varied opportunities for work experience and future employment

A coordinated programme of industry and employer engagement on curriculum design and a refreshed apprenticeship strategy.

Provision of excellent, professional advice and information on careers, qualifications, courses, enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Continue to deliver an 'outstanding' employability and work experience service to all UCB students.

- All undergraduate students able to take a placement year as part of their course and/or are provided with opportunities for integrated workplace learning within a professional degree programme.
- An increased number and range of high quality employers working with and supporting UCB students to achieve their career ambitions, particularly in new curriculum areas with regulatory or professional body links.
- Apprenticeship qualification achievement rates comparable to those reached by full-time students.
- Excellent graduate level employment or further study rates.

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

- Supports the University's objectives in its efforts to comply with Condition B3 (Quality – employer recognition) of our registration with the OfS

WE WILL:

Achieve important and ambitious Access and Participation Plan targets to ensure that everyone who has the ability to succeed at UCB is given the opportunity to do so

HOW?

By implementing the aims and objectives in the University's approved Plan and providing the associated significant financial support to which we have committed.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- Reduction in the percentage difference in degree attainment (1st and 2:1) between White and Black students to 6 percentage points by 2024/25.
- A gap exists in non-continuation rates between students who come from backgrounds of high participation in Higher Education and those who come from low participation backgrounds. This will be reduced for first degree undergraduate students to 0 by 2023/24.

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

- Supports the University's objectives in its efforts to comply with Condition A1 (Access) of our registration with the OfS

Open UCB to our local and regional communities making a sustained contribution to the development of skills, innovation, and confidence in the West Midlands

Work with local and national authorities on both aligning our curriculum to skills priorities and ensuring that the rest of our offer is recognised for the life-changing skillsets it provides.

Ensure that our students make a positive contribution to the local community through provision of services, volunteering, and being a good neighbour.

Take advantages of opportunities to engage in Knowledge Exchange activities, particularly developing our relationships with businesses and industries relevant to our curriculum.

- The University is established as a key partner in the Colleges West Midlands group.
- Attendance at relevant local meetings.
- Representation on local and regional decision-making bodies.
- Ability to submit data for HE-BCI return.



INVESTMENT, TRANSFORMATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

WE WILL:

Maintain and develop a strong programme of investment in our staff, their development and progression

HOW?

- » Implement a schedule of subject-specific and industry updating for academic staff to ensure currency and relevance of the curriculum being delivered.
- Support completion of higher level degrees across all relevant disciplines.
- Nurture inspirational leadership, embracing change and promoting a culture of accountability and collaborative working.
- Relaunch and refocus the current Professional Development Review programme.
- Working in partnership with senior managers, we will establish a clear leadership and talent identification programme.

Invest in campus-wide improvements to our educational infrastructure to support the development of the curriculum of the University and enhance the student experience

- » The development of a Digital Hub to support an innovative curriculum and improve business support.
- Transformation of the Summer Row building into a world class Further Education centre, with teaching and learning spaces and specialist practical vocational facilities.

Continue to embed sustainability in our campus-wide developments

- » By continuously striving to reduce CO2 emissions and waste across the campus.
- The implementation of carbon neutrality for all waste streams across campus.
- The transition of the remaining University vehicle fleet to low emission, hybrid or electric alternatives with further installations of electric vehicle charging points across campus.
- Student input and engagement will be prioritised and, through outreach work with local environmentally friendly companies and the community, our students will be encouraged to partake with sustainability drives and activities on and off campus.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- » An inviting and inclusive diverse academic and support services community for the benefit of all, a view which is regularly reflected in staff feedback.
- » Cutting-edge digital learning will be embedded into our course content in 2024, with students benefiting from flexibly delivered programmes and easy to use, centrally provided data and IT services.
- » To achieve the award of Silver Eco-campus status or above.
- Environmentally friendly installations across the campus, e.g. photovoltaic solar panels, rain water harvesting systems, smart lighting and plumbing systems will show significant energy efficiency savings.
- No waste produced on campus will go to landfill. Recycling will be used where possible or waste will be processed into electricity through a local energy plant. Food waste will be processed by anaerobic digestion into Bioenergy and fertiliser for local farms.
- The University has initiated the process of moving towards a more sustainable vehicle fleet by gaining an all-electric multi use vehicle. This process will continue by procuring low emission, hybrid and electric substitutes in exchange for the existing fleet. Additional electric vehicle charging points have also been integrated into the wider campus expansion with the development of Moss House.

WE WILL:

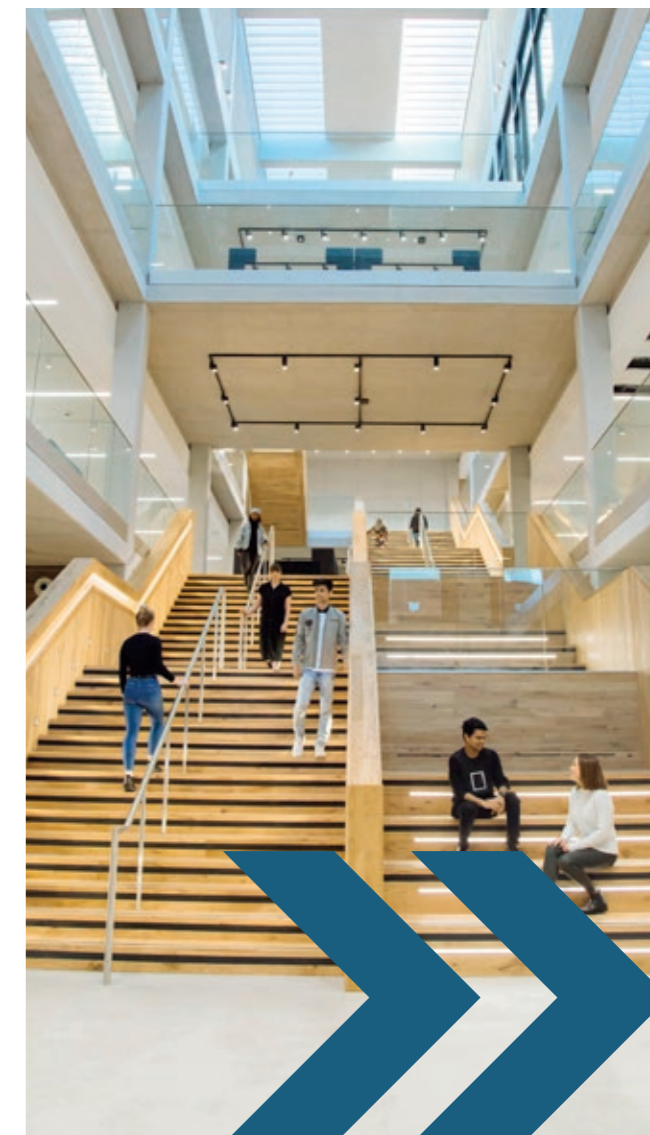
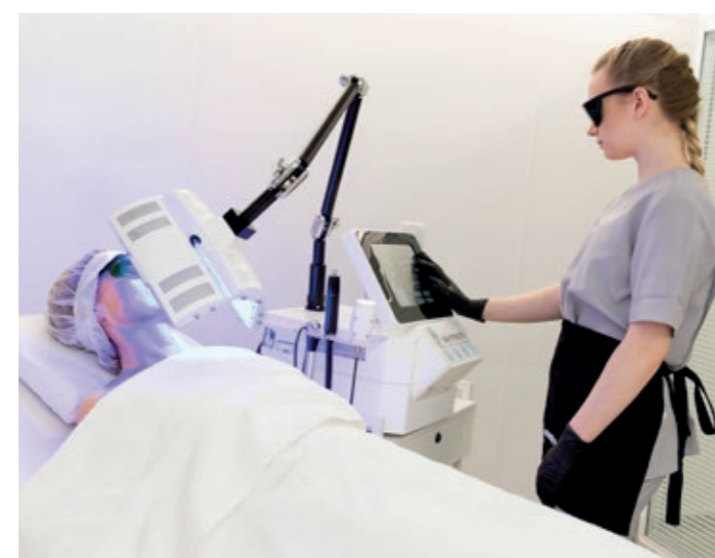
Develop a competitive and attractive commercial offer for business to both the city and the wider region

HOW?

- » Rebrand our food and drink offer to the private sector to include opportunities for private dining, events, pop-ups and chef experience days.
- Establishing a new pricing and promotion strategy for the next five years on our gym and sports facilities, based on competitor analysis and local opportunities.
- Develop a USP for our accommodation that is community and experience based, following a full competitor analysis of halls of residence in Birmingham.
- Establish independent booking websites for our food, accommodation and gym/aesthetics facilities.
- In all respects, develop meaningful commercial partnerships with local businesses that allow us to effectively promote our offer to clients.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- » An established conference and events department, with motivated staff throughout the University committed to improving our external customer service. Lasting and loyal customer relationships will be well established and repeat business will be the norm. Annual, monthly and weekly revenue targets will be set and, where possible, exceeded.



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