

# Enriching people through place

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Strategic Plan 2017– 2020

**We Are  
The Lakes**  
World Heritage

University of  
**Cumbria** 

**TEN**  
*years*  
2007-2017

## Our Vision

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To be recognised as a catalyst for individual and regional prosperity and pride with national and international relevance, reach and impact.

## Our Mission

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As a significant and sought after institution for Cumbria and North Lancashire, we work in partnerships to develop our region's talent and capabilities and attract new talent into our region to study and work and live. We raise aspirations and educational attainment and contribute to the social, cultural and economic wellbeing and prosperity of our communities.

## Our Values

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Our values define us as a university, informing our approach to students and staff and our ways of working. We are:

- **confident** – in our university, staff and students; inspiring, equipping and supporting our students and staff to succeed; celebrating and being proud of our individual and collective success;
- **adaptable** – adapting positively with integrity to our environment, emerging challenges and set-backs; open to new and different perspectives, beliefs, ideas and approaches;
- **engaging** – within and across our staff, student, stakeholders and wider communities; seeking out new approaches, ideas and perspectives to inform our thinking and practice;
- **leaders** – of place, people and practice; leading and professionally contributing to success; demonstrating individual and collective accountability;
- **innovating** – utilising our talent and expertise to deliver across boundaries focusing and developing our individual and collective talent to best effect; excellent at team working, working as one unified team to the benefit of our students and the communities we serve.

### Our Strategic Aims

We will deliver long-term institutional sustainability and success:

1. providing an appropriate and accessible academic portfolio and educational offer, which capitalises on place and meets individual, regional, sector and employer needs;
2. providing an excellent learning and teaching environment and student experience, equipping our graduates with the skills, attributes, confidence and resilience to succeed on graduation and beyond;
3. working in strategic partnerships with employers, education providers and stakeholders to optimise capability, offer and outcomes;
4. as a significant and sought after institution, contributing to place, practice and communities across our locations;
5. equipping and enabling our staff to succeed, and celebrating success.

Over the next three-year period, we will focus on:

- Capitalising on Place, Extending our Learner Base & Enhancing our Portfolio;
- Students and Graduate Success;
- Equipping and Enabling Staff;
- Sustainability and Success.

### Capitalising on Place, Extending our Learner Base & Enhancing our Portfolio

With an emphasis on place and partnership, we will extend our learner base and enhance the relevancy of our portfolio and academic offer, to draw new learners into the university and into the county.

## Capitalising on place

We will retain our presence in Carlisle, Ambleside, Lancaster and London. We will ensure each campus is student-focused: vibrant, digitally-enabled, with creative learning and social spaces, a clear identity and student and portfolio offer. Each campus will capitalise on place and associated market potential, which will be reflected in the university's brand and sub-brands. This will include place and portfolio alignment to the industrial and professional skills' needs of Cumbria and Lancashire, including west coast employers and the public sector, alongside consideration of the demographic, aspiration and attainment profile of our markets.

### Our Lancaster and Carlisle campuses will:

- act as local and regional hubs with portfolio positioned to meet student, employer and regional sector needs;
- use space creatively and purposefully to support campus vibrancy and the better provision of student learning and social space;
- provide an improved student residences' offer and staff accommodation;
- provide 'gateways' into Cumbria and North Lancashire for new learners, including an emphasis of working strategically across sectors to meet Cumbria's workforce and skills' needs.

### As the only university with a campus in a national park, Ambleside Campus will focus, to:

- act as the hub for the university's national and international relevant rural and visitor economy portfolio;
- contribute through location, heritage and strategic partnering to the university's national and international relevant Arts & Culture portfolio;
- engage in world-class research and knowledge exchange through the Centre for National Parks & Protected Areas, Centre for Regional & Economic Development and Institute for Leadership & Sustainability;
- provide a world-class venue for the delivery of programmes to employers, university stakeholders, international students and other university activities;
- enhance the UoC experience and offer to students based across other campuses and locations.

### As a well-established HE provider in the capital, London Campus, will provide a base and focal point, to:

- roll-out existing programmes and expertise, with a particular emphasis on apprenticeships, workforce development and off-campus learners;
- enhance our existing portfolio and offer to (non-London based) students, in areas such as education, health, business and visitor economy;
- raise our profile and connectivity with university stakeholders and supporters.

On the West Coast, utilising existing locations, we will develop a more visible presence, offer and routes into HE, directly and working through FE, employer and sector partnerships.

In addition, as the only university in Cumbria and as the lead for higher level skills in the county we will work in partnership with education providers and employers to raise aspirations and to address gaps in educational achievement and provision, across Cumbria and into North Lancashire. We will contribute to 'place' and 'place leadership' across the county and within the towns and communities we are located within through student volunteering, community and stakeholder engagement, and collaborative working.

## Extending our learner base

To serve better the needs of the region and to protect our market share, we will broaden our learner base to place a greater emphasis on off-campus learners, alongside seeking to increase on campus student numbers.

Higher Level Apprenticeships - Against our areas of academic strength, we will be the lead provider of Higher Level Apprenticeships in Cumbria, working across public and private sectors and in partnership with other education and training providers to provide comprehensive and coordinated apprenticeship solutions to employers. We will capitalise on our expertise in areas such as health, education, policing, paramedic science and professional services to meet employer needs beyond our region.

**FE partnerships** (off and to UoC campus) - We will work strategically with Further Education Colleges to: provide off-campus provision for learners in HE cold-spots; deliver STEM skills' needs; build regional and national progression routes to UoC campuses; establish regional and national subject-focused partnerships to build capability, reputation and numbers in areas such as outdoor studies, tourism, arts and culture.

**Work-force development** - Against our areas of academic strength, we will support workforce development and business improvement across the region's public and private sectors, with a particular emphasis on addressing higher-level skills and business needs.

We will place an emphasis on exploiting areas of our expertise, which have multi-sector relevance across Cumbria and North West and/or national and international relevance such as policing, paramedic science, leadership & management, project management. We will deliver through the provision of non-accredited, accredited, knowledge exchange and applied research activities.

**International** - Whilst recognising the constraints of recruiting international students to the UK, we will grow our international activities and student numbers through: the expansion of new and existing international (off-campus) partnerships; and targeted recruitment of Tier 4 students to Ambleside and Lancaster campuses and programmes.

We will expand non-Tier 4 provision (bespoke and blended) with emphasis on Ambleside, London and Lancaster, capitalising on place, heritage and strategic partnerships e.g. Lake District National Park, Wordsworth Trust, National Trust and Cumbria Tourism.

### **Enhancing our Portfolio**

Our portfolio and academic offer will draw on six academic core disciplines, providing an intellectual capability and capacity for our continued sustainability and future success. Across each area, staff will engage in research, teaching, enterprise, professional practice and 'domain' leadership. We will invest in our academic capability, leadership and development to develop our capability and build capacity. Across all of our academic disciplines, we will influence and inform sector, employer and discipline strategy, policy and practice.

**Our academic areas will reflect our core strengths and academic offer covering:**

- Health, Sport and Wellbeing;
- Education;
- Arts and Culture;
- Science, Technology, Engineering, Environment and Mathematics;
- Business and Professional Services;
- Visitor and Rural Economy (which needs to influence and interact with other discipline areas and departments to add to the relevancy and distinctiveness of our portfolio and offer)

We will consolidate and enhance our existing cpd, extended/undergraduate, masters and doctoral portfolio focusing on sustainability and success and prioritise demand-led development of new provision in STEM, Business & Professional Services, Visitor and Rural Economy. Our portfolio of academic programmes from cpd through to Masters and PhD will place an emphasis on optimising place (e.g. Arts & Culture and Visitor & Rural Economy) and strategic partnerships with employers and stakeholders, to enhance our capability, offer and opportunities.

Over the next period, we will expand the number of research centres and Centres of Excellence. To better brand our provision and expertise and to ensure we have research and knowledge exchange 'strength in depth' across all academic disciplines. Initial focus will include Centres of Excellence in Policing and Paramedic Practice and a new research centre for Education.

We will develop the brand of the University of Cumbria Business School, harnessing our growing expertise and standing in project management and related-disciplines, leadership, sustainability and economic development. To enhance our Business and Professional Services' portfolio, curriculum and growth potential and to support the regional Industrial Strategy and growth.

## Students and Graduate Success

We will provide a student environment, experience and excellent set of outcomes, which deliver long-term value and impact to graduates, employers and society, with a specific emphasis and focus on:

- Digitally-enabled and supported learning and environments;
- Research, practice and employer-informed curriculum;
- Distinctive curricula and student opportunities delivered through strategic partnering;
- Experience in the work-place/working with employers;
- Excellence in Learning & Teaching;
- Student and learner support, health & well-being;
- University of Cumbria graduate attributes, equipping our students for success and to stand out from the crowd;
- Campus identity, distinctiveness and vibrancy;
- Working with the Students' Union.

**Our students** will be recognised as individuals within a wider community and will often study in work contexts or professional environments. We will offer them innovative ways to study, at levels from Foundation to Doctorate, as equal participants in the University's learning community and co-creators of curriculum. They will be life-long learners, proud of their success and achievements as students and as UoC graduates.

**Our learning environment** will be flexible, distributed and 'fit for purpose' in being diverse and multi-faceted. Led and facilitated by staff who are expert practitioners, engaged in research and scholarly activity and at the forefront of their disciplines. We will continue to embed the use of digital technology for learning and skills development. Above all, our learning environments will offer an accessible, safe space for critical challenge and, where relevant, experimentation.

**Our curriculum** will foster aspiration and career and practice readiness through work-based, experiential and inter-professional learning. It will demand research-informed teaching designed and delivered by passionate, dynamic and confident staff, drawing on industry and practice-based knowledge and expertise. The curriculum will include content relevant to the current and future world of work, emphasising problem-solving and the interaction of theory and practice. It will challenge students intellectually, promoting independence and confidence. Authentic assessment and effective feedback will enable student success and achievement.

**Our partnerships and external engagement** will ensure that our programmes are forward-looking and our curriculum is contextually relevant and distinctive. Our partners will be recognised and engaged as part of the whole learner journey.

## Equipping and Enabling Staff

Our staff are our greatest asset and we will strive to ensure that all our staff are equipped, supported and valued. We will:

- inform and be informed by them, seeking new approaches, ideas and perspectives to inform our thinking and practice;
- seek to utilise and develop their talent and skills to best effect, within their area of activity and across the university, in contributing to student experience, outcomes and our ways of working;
- provide them with space and time to generate and explore new ideas and ways of working;
- encourage them to be enterprising and innovating whatever their role;
- expect and encourage team-working and team-playing;
- promote a culture of continuous staff development, across the university and across all roles;
- invest in our staff to develop their academic and professional knowledge and skills as well as their management and leadership capability;
- recognise and reward their contributions and celebrate, and be proud of, their successes.

## **Our future sustainability and success**

In light of the operating landscape, challenges and opportunities, we will define the future size and shape of the university and resourcing requirements. We will:

- ensure our academic and business models of working enable us to utilise our resource effectively and efficiently to deliver our priorities;
- support and expect great financial accountability, including academic managers, where resources follow income;
- align our professional services to best support our students, academic staff and business needs;
- define and deliver the required core academic, student and campus operation services for each of our sites supported by 'central' expertise and services;
- seek to utilise our internal expertise and skills (students and staff) wherever possible and promote this as part of our University of Cumbria brand;
- be digitally-enabled throughout our operations with 'fit for UoC' business systems and models;
- invest for success – in our staff, to divest, to reward, to raise profile and position, to develop new models of working;
- define the short to long-term development of our institutional and local Estates' strategy in line with 'portfolio in place' and students' needs; and we will be an exemplar in the sector for multi-site working.

We will focus on building and demonstrating our reputation and standing with:

- students and staff, celebrating individual and collective success;
- employers, partners and institutional stakeholders;
- academic stakeholders;
- prospective students and partners;
- our communities.

## **Measures of success**

We will have quantifiable and clear performance indicators to measure our success:

- Financial Sustainability
- Student Outcomes
- Research Outcomes
- Enterprise & Innovation
- Staff Satisfaction and Confidence
- Student numbers (off and on campuses)
- Social and Economic Impact
- Raising aspiration and attainment
- Strategic Partnerships

## **Delivering success**

This three-year plan will inform the university's academic, financial and infrastructure strategies for the period ahead, alongside the annual operating plan, academic department/directorate plans and strategic risk register for 2017/18 and beyond.