

UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER

STRATEGIC PLAN

VALUES AND VISION

INSPIRED FOR LIFE





The University of Worcester is a thriving engine of opportunity, with a genuinely global reputation for inclusion and innovation.

This Strategic Plan for the University of Worcester is published at a time of great national uncertainty, both for the higher education sector and the country as a whole.

It outlines the approach which will enable our university to navigate this most turbulent environment and go on to make a major contribution to the national and international renewal, which is so greatly needed.

Founded in 1946 to ‘win the peace through education’, Worcester has become a thriving, highly successful university for the 21st Century. The student voice and values have always been integral to Worcester’s vision. Our graduates are amongst the country’s most employable, and our practice is arguably the most inclusive in the UK.

Since earning university title in 2005, the University, thanks to the inspirational work of students, staff, governors, graduates and Fellows, combined with the generous support of our many partners and friends, has:

1. Co-created Europe’s first integrated university and public library and constructed Britain’s first inclusive indoor sports hall purpose-designed to include the wheelchair athlete
2. Made an outstanding contribution to the urban regeneration and renewal of Worcester – one of England’s finest cathedral cities
3. Become the best university in the UK for gender equality
4. Been consistently outstanding for environmental sustainability

5. Been a shining beacon for academic freedom worldwide
6. Championed inclusive sport and physical education across the globe
7. Pioneered the whole institution approach to widening participation
8. Led national work to promote positive student mental health and wellbeing
9. Been the most improved university for Research Power in the 2014 REF
10. Been one of the country’s fastest growing universities

During the next period, the University will build on our many successes to further improve the quality of our courses, the skills of our graduates and the impact we have in society. The University aims to grow in scope as well as in scale. By the early 2020s, we hope to further our excellent work in educating professionals to work in human health and wellbeing, with the creation of the Three Counties Medical School to serve the people of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Central to the future flourishing of the University will be the ability to combine institutional agility and innovation with educational excellence and timeless, inclusive human values.

We hope that you will find the approach taken in this strategy both empowering and compelling. We will be delighted to receive your feedback. All of us at the University of Worcester very much hope to have the opportunity of working with you in the months and years ahead.



John Bateman OBE
Pro Chancellor and Chair of Governors



Professor David Green CBE
Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive

Since its beginning, the University of Worcester has lived its maxim *'Inspired for Life'*, expressed through a culture of inclusion, creativity, effectiveness and friendliness.

As a university, we are an expression of democracy, progress, knowledge and principle. We believe the fundamental, transformative effect of higher education has benefits for individuals, and for society as a whole.

We endeavour to create an institution which encourages students to become good citizens, both within the University community and in the wider world. 'Inspired for Life' means that we not only support students and staff to succeed in their chosen career, but also that we motivate them to use the skills that they develop to build a better world. The University works across the whole life-course, acting as a force for good and seeking impact at every stage. We believe in educating and supporting the whole person, championing intellectual growth and academic achievement whilst recognising that we are much more than the sum of those achievements.

We have reimagined the modern university, developing our facilities to be public by design and opening our doors to the community.

We have demonstrated the contribution a university can make in strengthening the glue that holds society together, providing cultural resources, raising the aspirations of children and young people and impacting on wider issues related to health, citizenship and community cohesion. In the period ahead and beyond, the University intends to further extend and deepen this commitment to both student and public benefit. The goal, simply put, is to be engaged more productively than ever in the city, nation and world around us.

In the coming five years, we recognise the challenging external environment that universities face, but pledge not to compromise on our mission to inspire for life. While the University of Worcester is a very different place from the Teacher Training College founded in 1946, the character of the institution remains true to our timeless values. Now, as then, a close-knit and high-achieving community, an approach that values every individual and the generation of knowledge that can be put to work in society, are the forces that drive the University forward.



The Hive is the UK's first university and public library. It won the best large UK library award in 2016 from the Society of College, University and National Librarians.



We are ranked 15th in the country for teaching quality and 18th for student experience (The Times Good University Guide 2019).

Our approach, *which is built on the principle of inclusion*, has seen us become one of the fairest universities in the UK.

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER:

We value intellectual openness, democracy and love of learning.

We promote educational and social inclusion and equality.

We work with focus, commitment and ambition.

We behave with kindness and respect.

We expect ethical and professional behaviour.

We practice environmental sustainability and social responsibility.

OUR COMMITMENTS:

At the core of this Strategic Plan are *three commitments*:

We will create possibilities.

We will develop potential.

We will increase community engagement.

We will work together as a university community to realise these ambitious commitments. For each of our commitments we have identified the impact of the work and the benefit that it will bring.

This Strategic Plan sets our course for the journey into the early 2020s, and underpins our annually refreshed operational plan.



*We are one of the
10 largest teacher
training providers
in the country.*

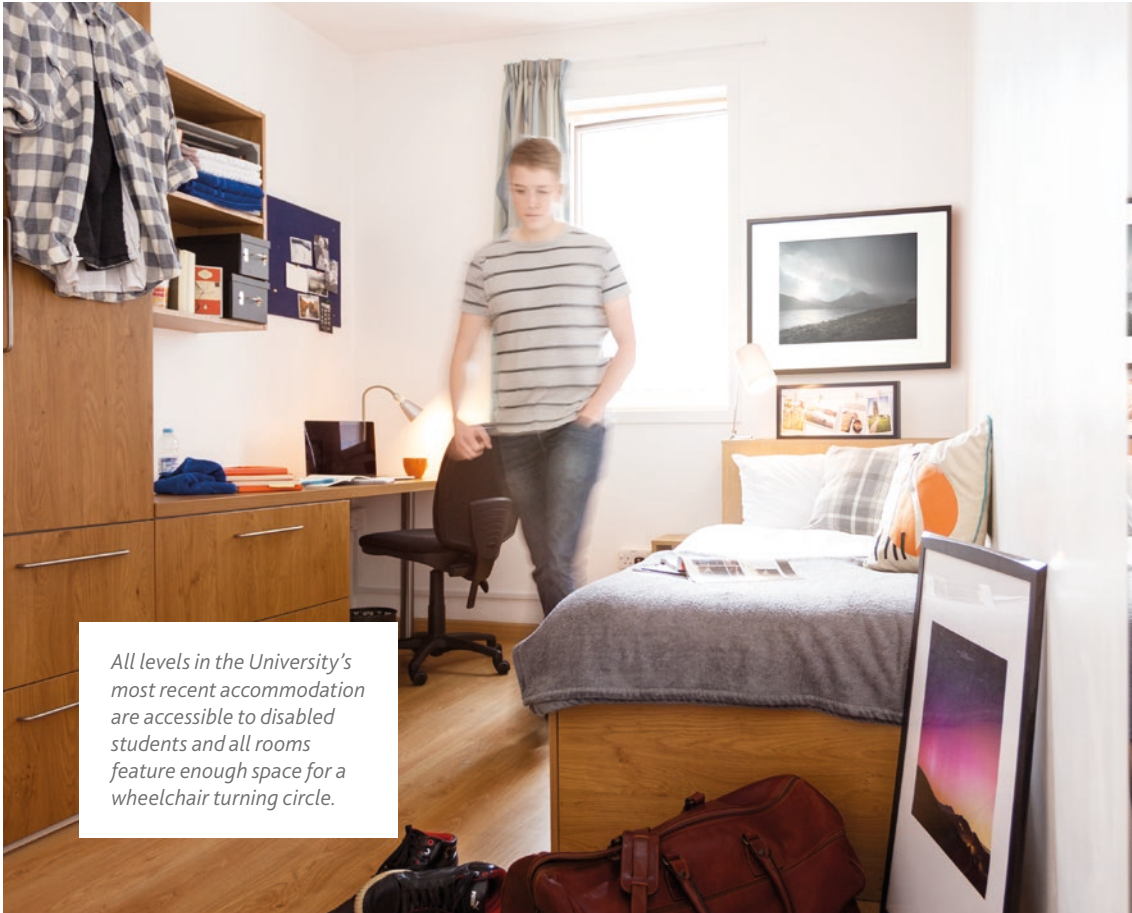
COMMITMENT 1:

We will create possibilities

We will provide more opportunities for students to study on relevant and intellectually stimulating academic and professional courses.

We will increase the number of students studying with us, particularly in areas with national employment shortages, including nursing and teaching. In doing this, we commit to safeguarding our outstanding record of inclusion, social mobility and gender equality over the next five years.

We will ensure financial sustainability and efficiency across all areas of the University, giving us long-term organisational stability.



All levels in the University's most recent accommodation are accessible to disabled students and all rooms feature enough space for a wheelchair turning circle.

THE TRANSFORMATIONAL EFFECT OF A WORCESTER EDUCATION

We believe that a university education both transforms the lives of individual students and the society in which we live. Statistically, graduates earn more, have greater social engagement, higher interpersonal trust and better health over their lifetime.

A Worcester education equips graduates for meaningful lives and careers, widens outlooks, and helps form character.

We have a long-held commitment to welcome and support students from a broad range of backgrounds. We are ranked in the top 10 UK universities to best reflect society in terms of socio-economic class, according to analysis by the Higher Education Policy Institute, an independent higher education think tank. The study revealed that the University of Worcester is eighth out of 132 UK universities for ensuring that people from all backgrounds have the chance to study at university.

During the life of this Plan, we will extend our partnership work with further education colleges, charities, businesses, health trusts, schools and other organisations to provide more educational and vocational learning opportunities.

We will further develop our embedded international college, creating many more opportunities for international students to study with us.

We will also create more opportunities for students through intelligent investment in our campus, refreshing and evolving learning and social spaces, and developing new facilities for medicine, health, sport and wellbeing at our Severn Campus in particular. We will increase the amount of high quality University student accommodation so that more of our students can live as well as study on campus.

MEETING EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIETAL NEEDS

During the 2010s, we widened our course portfolio to meet the needs and expectations of our students, as well as educating a high quality and flexible workforce for employers. We have launched many successful new areas, including Law, Biomedicine and the country's first MSc for Physician Associates. We will continue to develop new courses, and to expand areas of our current provision to respond to emerging employment and societal needs.

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

Schools and education have been at the heart of our work since our inception. As one of the country's 10 biggest providers for teacher training, we are at the forefront of educating caring and insightful professionals. The number of secondary school pupils is projected to increase by 19% between 2017 and 2026, but national trainee numbers have been below targets every year since 2012.

Teachers play a truly crucial role in society and affect so many lives, so much for the better. In the years ahead we will do all in our power to help protect and further enhance the standing of the teaching profession. This is particularly important as inspiring teachers are so central to creating opportunity and enriching lives.

Worcester-trained teachers are renowned for their expertise, commitment, quality and inclusive approach. We will increase the number of high-calibre Worcester-trained teachers. We will continue to campaign for the proper expansion of well-funded early years education and for sustained investment in the education system for all our children and young people. We will also further increase the range of the continuing professional development opportunities we offer, so that educational professionals have the opportunity to become ever more effective in the vital roles they play.

HEALTH

In 2018, official statistics revealed that one in 11 posts across NHS hospital, ambulance and mental health trusts were vacant. With our long history of outstanding Nursing and Health Education and as leaders of the national campaign to increase nursing places, we are ready to help meet this workforce crisis.

We will grow our existing courses for health professionals and will create a new Medical School, meeting the urgent needs of our region for compassionate, high quality doctors.



The University launched a new LLB course, with a specific emphasis on employability. The University's Law students, under expert supervision, offer free legal advice in employment law.



Our well-qualified graduates help to meet the employment demands of the region and nation, particularly in shortage areas such as health and education.

COMMITMENT 2:

We will develop potential

We are deeply committed to developing the whole person.

We will create and sustain the conditions that enable all Worcester students to benefit from an educational experience that is intellectually, socially and personally transformative.

The success of our students depends on the success of our staff. We will further invest in training to empower staff to be adaptable and to develop their professional skills, helping them to meet the challenges of a changing world. We will develop the potential of our researchers to produce scholarship which contributes positively to culture, knowledge and human wellbeing and to widely disseminate their findings.

We will also foster the scholarly and research skills of our students, with teaching that is underpinned by science, research and deep expertise to stimulate our students' intellectual curiosity and ambition.



We are ranked 10th in the country for overall satisfaction in the 2018 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey.

LEARNING HOW TO LEARN

We support all our students, staff and partners to reap the lifelong rewards that stem from higher education and will strive to further improve retention and achievement across the University. High quality teaching has always been at the very heart of the University of Worcester, with our students as co-creators of their educational experience and success. Our National Student Survey results for personal development are consistently outstanding and demonstrate learning gains in communication skills and the ability to tackle unfamiliar problems.

We encourage all members of the University community to learn from the respectful expression of diverse perspectives. We will continue to listen to and benefit from the creativity and enthusiasm of our students by further strengthening our already effective systems of student representation, feedback and participation.

We will encourage interaction in the community and engagement with social issues and civic affairs through participative experiences. We will extend the possibilities for international study and work exchange for both students and staff.

Emerging forms of employment require people to combine subject knowledge with the ability to work productively with people from other professions and cultural backgrounds. The capacity to 'learn how to learn', alongside qualities such as empathy, emotional intelligence, independence, self-confidence and initiative will be increasingly more important. We will build on our existing opportunities for personal development, enabling students to gain excellent communication skills and to work collaboratively with others.



The Teaching Excellence Framework panel commended our approaches to course design, which it said 'involves consultation with local employers and students and which provides high levels of stretch and significant challenge'.



Our Peirson Study and Guidance Centre offers students a single point of contact for all of their queries.

MENTAL WELLBEING

The University has a deep commitment to inclusion for those experiencing mental health problems. We have offered specialist wellbeing support to students since 2000, while in 2004 we were one of the first universities in the UK to directly employ Mental Health Advisors. We are playing a leading role in partnership with the National Union of Students and others to make universities and cities 'suicide safer' through early intervention.

Building on this expertise, and in co-operation with our many partners, we renew our commitment to our work in this area. At a time when levels of mental illness, mental distress and low wellbeing are increasing in society as a whole as well as in the higher education community, we will help our students and staff build resilience and independence.

PREPARING FOR LONG, PORTFOLIO CAREERS

The working environment is evolving in ways that can only partially be foreseen. Tomorrow's economy is likely to be increasingly dominated by services, technology and complex human interactions. Many areas of employment are disappearing, shrinking profoundly or about to be transformed. As new knowledge is developed, graduate skills are more in demand than ever. The fundamental role of higher education in creating our future is key.

Our graduates already have an exemplary employment track-record as measured by many published indicators. According to the Government-published Longitudinal Educational Outcomes study (2017), Worcester graduates are in the top ten in the country for sustained employment, with or without further study, one, three and five years after graduation.

As the pattern of work changes, we will continue to innovate to retain our long-standing graduate success and prepare our students for the complex demands of long careers.

A key feature of a University of Worcester education is our ability to create and sustain *the golden triangle of professional education*, which interweaves expert knowledge and practical learning.

Well-motivated Student



Expert Profes-
sional Mentor

Inspiring
Educator

THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

The three points of the triangle are the well qualified, able and motivated student; the inspiring University educator; and the expert professional mentor. Each brings their own experience, expertise and commitment to the learning process. This dynamic enables students to become confident, active and engaged citizens in the classroom and beyond.

We will expand this highly successful model, ensuring that every academic course offers the opportunity for students to access work experience, internships or placements.



Our Nursing students spend 2,300 hours in clinical practice during their degree.



A MORE POWERFUL SPRINGBOARD

Our graduates will require an even more powerful springboard to launch successful professional lives, with a range of experience and knowledge.

The creation of new, professionally relevant taught Master’s courses and other additional qualifications will deliver an educational advantage, helping our graduates to be ahead of the competition and to secure employment.

Their working lives are also certain to include the need for professional reinvention as technology and techniques evolve and human knowledge and understanding develop further. We will help our graduates to change employment, or update and develop their skills, throughout their careers. We will improve opportunities for students and graduates through more active alumni engagement, and extend the support that we offer alumni.

RESEARCH IMPACT

More than ever, we are a national and international University, contributing and shaping the conversation on far-ranging issues of policy and debate, from academic freedom to inclusive physical education.

Our research and educational partnerships extend across the world, with projects ranging from wetland farming in East and Southern Africa to leading the UK’s largest study on Bipolar Disorder – work which has the potential to affect millions of lives globally. This generation and application of knowledge in turn enables us to make a significant, enduring impact on society.

We were the most improved university for research in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework. Over the next period, we will work hard to attract high quality researchers to complement existing areas of excellence, and selectively develop new research areas, with the potential to grow research income.

COMMITMENT 3:

We will increase community engagement

The proactive involvement of our students and staff and the accessibility of our facilities have an impact on the world outside the University.

We commit to enhancing and enriching our ties to the region, the nation, and the world, so that Worcester is recognised as the exemplar of a community-engaged university.

As we continue to expand our work in the world around us, we will hold ourselves to certain principles. We will conduct our work in a manner that is grounded in scholarship, research, science, expertise and service to the whole community, and pursued with robust staff and student involvement.

We will form sustainable and productive partnerships, ones that include our professional, educational and community partners in the design and use of facilities and programmes.

We will reaffirm our mandate to contribute to urban renewal and the cultural life of Worcester through the creation of inclusive facilities.

We will measure our positive impact through the application of an approach that multiplies quantity by quality, factored by social relevance.



200,000 children annually participate in events at the Arena.



The Hive has one of the largest children's libraries in the country.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

We recognise that the flourishing of the University is inextricably connected to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the region in which we live.

Our ideas, skills, resources and energy contribute much to the communities of which we are a part. By harnessing our people, research excellence, expert knowledge and infrastructure, we can help find innovative solutions to the big challenges which face society.

The quality of our close relationships with organisations provides many rich opportunities for our students, as well as strengthening scholarship and research across the University.

We will build on our existing excellent partnerships, giving more of our students invaluable work placements and ensuring that our graduates continue to be amongst the most sought after in the UK.



INCLUSIVE FACILITIES AND OPEN DOORS

We have deliberately chosen to develop our estate inclusively, creating buildings that are conducive to co-operation and success. The opportunity to study at The Hive, Europe's first integrated university and public library, is a day-to-day encouragement to active citizenship and learning. Sustained investment throughout the campus, typified by the University of Worcester Arena, the country's first indoor sports arena purpose-designed to include wheelchair athletes, promotes participation for those with physical impairment and encourages wellbeing.

These two flagship facilities were joined in 2018 by the University of Worcester Art House, which provides a centre for children's creative camps as well as a magnificent space for the University's many Art and Illustration students.

These buildings, and our open approach to community use of our facilities generally, exemplify our ethos, with hundreds of thousands of people every year visiting and taking part in activities at the University.

Over the next five years, we will develop our Severn Campus to include facilities for medicine, health and wellbeing.

In partnership, we will develop the world's first inclusive indoor cricket centre on the campus, which will become a national home for all forms of disability cricket as well as a marvellous facility for the region's children and cricketers.

We will continue to build and open our facilities in imaginative ways for the public benefit, to encourage cohesion and to contribute to our community becoming even safer, stronger and more engaged.



We restored a landmark Art Deco building in the heart of Worcester, which is now our Art House – a centre for children’s creative camps as well as a magnificent space for the University’s many Art and Illustration students.



CITY CAMPUS

TODAY 2009



THE HIVE LIBRARY

2009 TODAY

Then & Now

The University's approach has helped to transform the city of Worcester, providing positive urban regeneration, jobs and opportunities, with the promise of more to come.





THE ARENA
TODAY 2010

The development of the University has had a profound effect on the city of Worcester.





Our graduates and researchers are answering the call to solve some of society's most pressing needs and challenges.



INSPIRED FOR LIFE



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