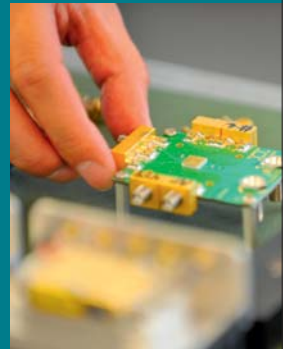




University of Essex

Our future



Strategic Plan
2009-10 to 2013-14

Preamble

Built upon a robust set of key performance indicators, this strategic plan points the way to an ambitious programme of investment designed to establish Essex as a university with global impact and an international reputation that is unparalleled for a university of our size, underpinned by our strong regional base.



Professor Colin Riordan
Vice-Chancellor

We will grow through partnership (regional and international) and through developing our multi-campus footprint. We will invest prudently, with a focus on student experience and on enhancing our position as a top-ten university for research quality. We will focus a proportion of our resource on a small number of collaborative research projects that will lever external funding to address major global challenges facing humanity. We will maintain our commitment to widening participation and will continue to focus on the recruitment of high quality students both at home and internationally.

Given the diversity and strength of our income base alongside our effective mechanisms for cost management, the University of Essex will remain financially resilient even if we face future funding constraints.



Academic Strategy: Excellence with Impact

academic strategy | university

Introduction

In the last ten years the University has undergone transformational change. From being a single-campus university numbering some 5,700 students and 1,165 staff offering a traditional, if limited range of subjects, we have become a multi-campus university of almost 10,000 students and 2,000 staff with a clear commitment to our region, a well-developed set of partnerships delivering higher education in further education colleges and a well-defined global agenda. In addition to our traditional strengths in social sciences and long-standing reputation in science and engineering and the humanities, we now offer highly successful professional education in subjects as diverse as health, acting and enterprise, and have established the thriving Essex Business School with a distinctive profile that captures the zeitgeist and is built on a powerful core of top-ranked research.

Overview

Essex has a commitment both to the very highest quality research and to giving an opportunity to study to all those with the potential to succeed. Reconciling the demands of research and the student experience, of the academic and the applied, can be difficult, but underlying the whole of our academic strategy is a genuine commitment to academic excellence, cultural influence, economic impact and social justice.

Social sciences remain central to our academic strategy, forming as they do the backbone of our academic reputation. Building on our top-ranked strengths in the social sciences, our strategy for

science and engineering focuses on the interface between people and technology, developing our strengths in health, environment, networks and neuroscience. Teaching and research in the humanities operate on the boundary between the critical and the creative, such that engagement in practice and with the creative industries underlies all critical activity. There is a particular emphasis on professional education underpinned by research at the most demanding level in the areas of law and management, while professional training to degree and post-degree level forms the core activity in health and acting.

Our strategy for teaching and learning places students at the centre, engaging them in collaborative learning in a supportive and well-resourced academic environment. We will enhance the quality of student learning through investment in the learning environment and in our staff and their development, and will equip students with the skills and experience to maximise their employability as graduates and by providing internal work-placements to students via the Frontrunners scheme.

Our research strategy aims at disproportionately increasing research-grant income via collaborations, improved grant-bid quality and broader engagement of researchers in the bidding process. We will be making targeted investments and increasing the volume of high-quality researchers eligible for submission in the Research Excellence Framework, adapting to the new emphasis on 'impact' as appropriate.

The defining feature of our academic work in all respects is excellence with impact.



academic strategy | faculty | humanities and comparative studies

The Faculty fosters creative and critical thinking applied to human practices and the creative arts, taking an interdisciplinary approach to applying fundamental theoretical and practice-led inquiries to the ethical and cultural challenges of the twenty-first century. The Faculty's world-class research strength was confirmed by the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, with particular success in History, Philosophy and Art History and Theory, which feature amongst the top ten UK departments in their respective disciplines.

In order to maintain this success, and acknowledging an increasingly competitive climate, the Faculty aims to:

- Maintain and develop research strength.
- Improve research grant application success rates.
- Develop interdisciplinary collaboration, both within and outside the institution.
- Encourage applications for practice-led and creative and performing arts awards that have the potential to widen participation in research.
- Address the Higher Education Funding Council for England requirement of user-valued economic and social impact of research.
- Develop and maintain international links and research to raise the Faculty's profile and impact.
- Encourage knowledge transfer, acknowledging that this is often a two-way process.

Amongst other departmental priorities, the Faculty will focus on strategically significant projects identified by the Global Challenges initiative, such as the Transitional Justice project. Faculty members have been active in contributing to creative industries, knowledge transfer and public engagement but further potential exists for externally-funded activity.

We will also encourage applications for seedcorn funding initiatives, such as the Knowledge Transfer Innovation Fund (KTIF), 'Iceni' and East of England Development Agency (EEDA) 'Proof of Market' schemes, which can be used to leverage larger funding awards.

Humanities and Comparative Studies delivers a unique and highly-valued research-informed student experience across a broad range of undergraduate, postgraduate and research programmes. Students are taught by internationally recognised academics, and research and professionally active support staff.

The Faculty's primary learning and teaching objectives are:

- To maintain and improve the Faculty's above-average scores (both nationally and at a University level) for the quality of student experience.
- To increase international student recruitment and exchange, especially from Anglophone countries and through bilateral study abroad opportunities.
- To diversify and innovate in its provision of degree programmes with reference to relevant market research and University planning objectives, including both development of new degrees and introduction of new delivery mechanisms, such as accessible part-time structures for postgraduate taught courses.
- To engage actively with current University career development and employability initiatives and embed discipline-relevant employability skills within degree programmes.
- To promote engagement in student enterprise initiatives that are designed to develop entrepreneurial skills and awareness.
- To introduce opportunities for students to gain relevant discipline-related work experience through internships, voluntary activity, group projects and increased links with regional business and creative industries.

To achieve these objectives:

- The Faculty will actively engage with current University career development and employability initiatives and embed discipline-relevant employability skills within degree programmes.
- A variety of new degree programmes are being introduced.
- Future phases of curriculum review will be more explicitly linked to market research and planning, and may include rationalisation and harmonisation of provision, as well as new developments and regional collaboration with partner colleges.



academic strategy | faculty | social sciences

The Faculty of Social Sciences boasts an outstanding international research reputation that places the University as the top university for social sciences in the UK, as confirmed by the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise.

The Faculty will retain this position by:

- Maintaining its research strength and further growing research income.
- Increasing its collaborative research.
- Improving its ranking in worldwide social science league tables through improved communication, extending international networks, and developing links with its international alumni.

The Faculty is already well placed to demonstrate the social and economic impact of its work, in particular through the activities of the Institute for Social and Economic Research, the UK Data Archive, the Centre for Research in Economic Sociology and Innovation and the Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis.

The Faculty will develop these further by:

- Growing its consultancy and its work with professional bodies.
- Further developing external provision of training seminars and methods courses, and continuing to give public lecturers.
- Engaging with cultural and social issues in the eastern region.

The Faculty delivers a broad range of taught and research programmes, providing a quality educational experience. Students enjoy access to leading specialists and research-led teaching ensures that all students benefit from the latest developments.

The Faculty's key objectives are to:

- Increase its focus on equipping students with key transferable skills, whilst ensuring they graduate with a core knowledge base in their subject area.
- Expand numbers of internships and other forms of work-based experience and seek to maintain its international presence by establishing new overseas institutional links.
- Increase the numbers of students undertaking study abroad, develop an internationally focused curriculum and respond rapidly to global curriculum trends.
- Improve its ranking in the national student satisfaction league tables to reflect the quality of its offering and continue to aim to select the best students, irrespective of their background.



academic strategy | faculty | science and engineering

The Faculty of Science and Engineering brings together five departments and schools which make diverse contributions to the University's strategic mission to be a globally competitive, research-intensive and student-focused institution, delivering research-led teaching and professional training.

Internationally acknowledged as leaders in pure and applied human sciences and information technologies, this is a research-intensive Faculty and the leader of the inter-faculty Global Challenges projects, New EcoCultures and Future Internet Innovation. The relevant and contemporary teaching of the Faculty equips students with transferable skills that benefit people, the environment and society and enable innovative approaches to global issues.

The Faculty will develop its research strengths in four key areas:

- Human health, well-being and vulnerability.
- Environmental science.
- New technologies, networks and communication.
- Cognitive systems and neuroscience.

Already the leading faculty for knowledge transfer, Science and Engineering will continue to develop and extend its academic activities and partnerships with industry, Government, NGOs, schools, the NHS and international organisations.

The Faculty's key objectives include:

- Increased research grant awards and expanded research groupings in key domains.
- Increased number of grant submissions and engagement in interdisciplinary research.
- Good publication rates and increased mentoring of junior staff.
- Improved financial sustainability by enhancing and diversifying income streams.
- Higher internal and external profile through enhanced communications and knowledge transfer.
- Strengthened regional health partnerships in teaching and research, and growth in nursing and oral health provision at the Southend Campus.
- Continued improvement in facilities with investment in laboratories in Biological Sciences and the new Media Lab in Computer Science and Electronic Engineering.
- Maintain and improve existing good performance in student satisfaction surveys focusing on improved assessment and feedback.
- Further develop existing good practice in employability and departmental links with employers.



academic strategy | faculty | law and management

The Faculty of Law and Management – which consists of Essex Business School, the School of Law, and the Human Rights Centre – supports and builds upon key features of the University's strategic vision.

The Faculty is committed to developing professional leaders of the future within an international environment of innovative scholarship that creates value, generates enterprise, fosters responsibility and contributes to social justice.

Principal academic objectives are to:

- Provide an educational experience of the highest quality for students at all levels.
- Be a leader both in national and international research.
- Forge links with the business community to the advantage of both students and business particularly in the local community.
- Attract and retain teaching staff of the highest calibre.
- Recruit students aiming to achieve excellence and to provide the resources required to help them fulfil their potential.
- Prepare students for successful careers, offering development and employability guidance and embedding relevant skills within degree programmes.

The academic strategy emphasises the international character of the Faculty's students and staff, the relevance of the curriculum to the twenty-first century and the educational preparation offered for life and work in a global economy.

Key actions are to:

- Promote innovation and knowledge transfer by means of departmental champions who will identify opportunities arising in both the private and public sectors.
- Pursue new research opportunities and teaching collaborations regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Initiate and support Continuing Professional Development programmes and partnerships.
- Play a key role in the development, programmes and services of the new Institute for Democracy and Conflict Resolution, exploiting opportunities for synergy across the Faculty.



theme one | research

Strategic Aim One – To continue to be recognised for the world-class standard of our research and scholarship.

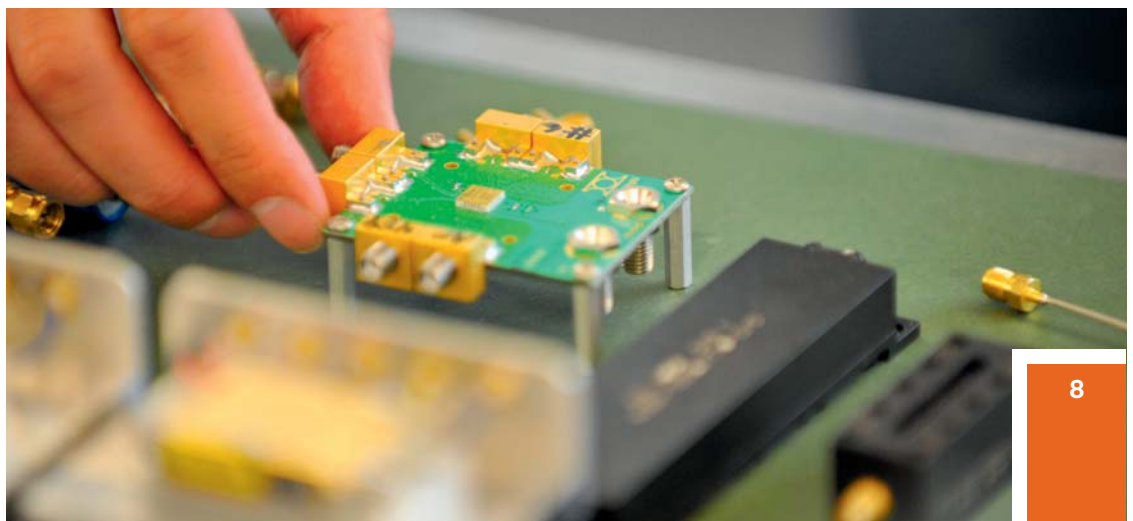
The 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) produced a top-ten ranking for the quality of the University's research. In addition, an increased number of departments achieved top-ten rankings within their individual subject league tables. The RAE result further underscored the pre-eminence of social sciences at Essex with two first place rankings and all the Social Science departments being ranked in their subject top four.

The University aims to maintain and extend this leading research profile; key objectives are to:

- Conduct a major review of Essex subject research strategies in the light of the UK RAE data now available, addressing both identified strengths and weaknesses, and thus determining areas for further improvement and potential future investment.
- Following the review of subject research strategies, develop a University-level research/Research Excellence Framework (REF) strategy (during the academic year 2009-10) to position the University for the forthcoming REF. Aspects of this strategy will include: support and, where appropriate and possible, growth of existing strong Essex activity; the identification of new areas of activity; aspects of research infrastructure that require support and investment; and means of achieving a significant growth in research volume and intensity across the University.

- Closely monitor the emerging REF to ensure continuing strong match between Essex research performance criteria and the new requirements.
- Continue and extend the policy of disproportionately growing research grant income via continuous improvement of submitted grant bid-quality, engagement of more researchers in grant-winning activities, and through a policy of building high-quality internal and external collaborations.
- Maintain and seek to further improve the recruitment of the highest-calibre researchers into positions where research is stipulated as part of the appointment contract.
- Develop research governance structures in line with the new Faculty-based academic organisation, and further enhance the quality of research management within departments.
- Support and maintain four major Global Challenges projects focusing on research with global significance. Further information on Essex's Global Challenges, including the four projects (below) is available online.
 - Constructing a new global socio-economic and political order
 - Finding answers to global threats
 - Transitions to peace and prosperity
 - Reinventing the internet.

For further information, see the Research community pages on the Research and Enterprise Office web site and the Global theme of the Strategic Plan. Further information on Essex's Global Challenges, including the four projects is also available (www.essex.ac.uk/global_challenges/).



theme two | student experience

Strategic Aim Two – To provide a superior student experience for all our students, through engagement with research-informed teaching delivered by leading academic scholars, using both traditional and contemporary delivery methods, in supportive, stimulating and well-resourced academic environments.

The University has four key learning and teaching aims:

- Engage students in a high-quality, student-centred and collaborative learning experience founded on the expert knowledge of academic and support staff.
- Enhance the quality of student learning by providing a supportive and well-resourced learning environment.
- Empower students through academic knowledge, equipping them with the skills vital for future success.
- Enable those who teach and support student learning to develop their scholarship and professional practice.

These aims will be supported by six objectives:

- Learning and teaching informed by research, utilising innovative teaching and assessment methods.
- Enhancement of the learning environment through provision of a new University Student Centre and Library extension, and development of additional high quality multi-purpose teaching space to meet the University's growth targets.

- Support students to improve their skills and employability through introduction of credit-rated career development and work-related project modules, which will be introduced from 2010-11 both as co-curricular opportunities, and as embedded degree content.
- Complementing this, the University will work with partners such as the Students' Union and external agencies to accredit volunteering experience; students will have improved access to study abroad opportunities; and the Frontrunners work placement scheme will be doubled to offer more than 200 internal placements per year with associated training from 2009-10.
- Better targeting of professional development for academic, support and research staff at all stages of their careers, achieved by linking staff appraisal with development provision and through introduction of a revised Performance and Development Review process and database records.
- Development of a 'student compact' to make explicit the contact hours and service levels students at Essex can expect, and the engagement and commitment which the University in turn requires from our students to achieve a good degree.

Further information is available from the Learning and Teaching Unit and the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

The University has a strong Students' Union, with high levels of student engagement in its activities, and works in partnership with the Students' Union to enhance student support, facilities and the overall student experience.



theme three | knowledge transfer

Strategic Aim Three – To act as a major stimulus for social, cultural and economic development, through innovation, enterprise and partnerships.

The three priority aims of our knowledge transfer strategy – *Inspiring innovation*; *Stimulating regional prosperity*; and *Enabling enterprise* – reflect the University's commitment to making a significant contribution to regional, national and international economic, social and cultural development.

The University is responding to the increasingly complex issues facing modern-day societies and economies by leveraging its interdisciplinary approach to research and sharing the outcomes via a variety of channels and with a range of partners. Our impact on economies, societies and cultures will be a function of our ability to disseminate knowledge arising from our research and to develop skilled, entrepreneurial students.

We will increase the level of engagement in knowledge transfer activities both through greater participation by our staff and students, and by stimulating increased demand from businesses, policy makers, and the public and third sectors. We will also ensure that there are opportunities for knowledge and expertise to flow from outside organisations into the University.

Inspiring innovation will be based on engaging interdisciplinary groups in contract and collaborative research, consultancy, knowledge transfer partnerships (KTPs) and licensing in response to the demands of a growing knowledge economy and a diverse set of global challenges.

Stimulating regional prosperity will deliver facilities, access to networks and links to relevant support agencies for local and regional enterprises, an expansion in the provision of training and professional development programmes enabling higher level skills acquisition by a wide range of businesses, public sector bodies and charities. The University will also seek to develop additional channels to disseminate knowledge to a wider audience.

Enabling enterprise will facilitate the development of entrepreneurial individuals and communities through the provision of a more comprehensive and integrated programme to support entrepreneurship, graduate start-ups, employability skills, access to networks, funding and start-up facilities.

As a small, research-led, institution, we will optimise our impact by focusing more on interdisciplinary research activities and seeking partners with which we can deliver 'total solutions' for research users. This approach is also relevant to our engagement with society, and can enrich our offerings to local communities.

This activity is supported by the development of the Knowledge Gateway focussing on the University's international research strengths. The flagship development will be a new Institute for Democracy and Conflict Resolution, which will form the central component of phase 1 of the Gateway. The project also comprises an office village plus hotel/leisure facilities and a new entrance to the University.

Further information can be found in the University's Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) strategy and in the Knowledge transfer section on the Research and Enterprise Office website.



theme four | global

Strategic Aim Four – To continue to be a leading UK university of choice for international students and to further develop the international dimension of our research, educational and cultural activities.

The University has been committed, since its inception, to internationalisation. This is reflected in its character, outlook and values – in the international perspective that characterises much of its teaching and research and the large proportion of students and academic staff who are recruited from outside the UK. The University draws its students from 130 countries and has staff of 70 nationalities.

The University takes pride in its dynamic international community, the support and experience it provides for its international students, and the international opportunities it affords all its students and staff.

The University has created the new post of Dean of International Development to provide strategic leadership, and to develop and implement a new International Strategy which will:

- Further elaborate, develop and support the University's ambitions under the Global strategic aim.
- Ensure that opportunities and connections between international research, education and curricula, mobility (staff and students), capacity-building and development can be taken and made effectively.

Strong recruitment of international students remains a cornerstone of the strategy, ensuring that the University's international character continues into the future. Increasingly, as the national and international context changes, further emphasis will be placed on developing bilateral and multilateral institutional links, trans-national educational initiatives and building recruitment activities upon research and other academic collaborations between the University and its increasing range of international partners.

Central to the International Strategy is the goal of building the Global Alliance – a strategic alliance of universities from around the world, allowing multilateral collaboration across the full range of our core activities.

The University will also support, within the institution and with a broad range of international partners, a small number of Global Challenge research projects. Through these Global Challenges and the Global Alliance, the University will seek to:

- Fulfil its economic, social and cultural obligations.
- Undertake international teaching and research collaborations.
- Share best practice in teaching, learning, management and leadership.
- Share marketing and profiling opportunities.
- Develop the University's global visibility and influence.
- Focus on research with global significance.

Further information on Essex's Global Challenges, including the four projects is available online.



theme five | finance

Strategic Aim Five – To support the delivery of the University’s strategic plan, ensuring that new and continuing activities are financially sustainable.

In 2008 the University embarked upon a new investment-led financial strategy aimed at achieving long-term financial sustainability. By investing in four key themes – the student experience, research, teaching capacity and in enhancing the fabric of the University – we aim to increase our self-reliance and determine our own agenda for the future.

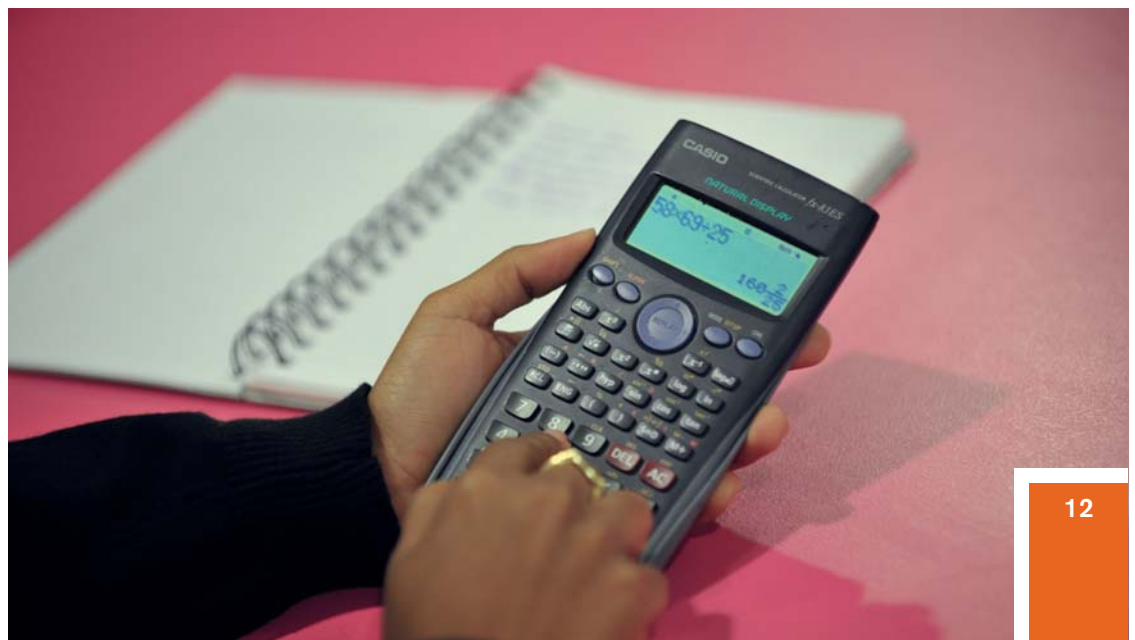
To support increased investment we set ourselves the target of achieving a level of recurrent surplus (5 per cent of turnover by 2010-11) sufficient to fund investment and protect against the unexpected. Critical to achieving this goal is a cost-reduction exercise implemented at the start of 2008, aimed at reducing the cost base by £5 million (by 2010-11). This exercise has been successfully completed and cost reductions have already begun to flow through.

The 5 per cent surplus target is being deployed to fund 3 per cent strategic investment, 1 per cent sustainability (long-term maintenance) and 1 per cent contingency. The progress we have made in

implementing our strategy has provided the confidence to begin the investment programme. Capital investment has commenced and we are now budgeting for enhanced maintenance and recurrent investment. As a consequence our surplus target has been recalibrated to 3.5 per cent of turnover, reflecting enhanced recurrent investment.

In spite of the significant pressure on public finances caused by the credit crunch and the recession and the additional commitment to fund a 5 per cent pay award (agreed October 2008) and significantly increased pension costs from October 2009, progress towards achieving our financial objectives remains solidly on track. Stronger than expected student number growth, impressive growth in research grant and contracts income, combined with effective cost control across all operations have contributed to this position.

In 2008-09 income grew by 12 per cent (target 5 per cent), while income from philanthropic sources was £1.4 million in 2008-09 (target of the five year planning period £6 million) following the receipt of one substantial legacy. The ratio of staff cost to total income has declined from 62 per cent in 2006-07 to 59 per cent in 2008-09 and is set to decline further as the full benefits of cost reductions continue to flow through.



supporting theme one | facilities

Supporting Strategy One – To be a university housed in modern campuses, with infrastructure fit for the twenty-first century.

The University will continue to provide the highest quality academic, cultural, sporting and residential facilities across its campuses.

The University will improve academic facilities for teaching, learning and study. This will include a programme of increased audio-visual and e-facilities in teaching rooms and reconfiguration of current accommodation to match evolving needs, including the creation of dedicated high quality space for Essex Business School and expanded laboratory facilities for the Faculty of Science and Engineering.

The central boiler house on the Colchester Campus will be converted into a Learning Centre that will provide multiple seminar rooms configured in flexible accommodation. Open learning space and expanded library provision will be incorporated within plans for a new Student Centre adjoining the Albert Sloman Library. At the Southend Campus, enhanced library provision and new teaching provision will be developed as part of the Elmer Square project.

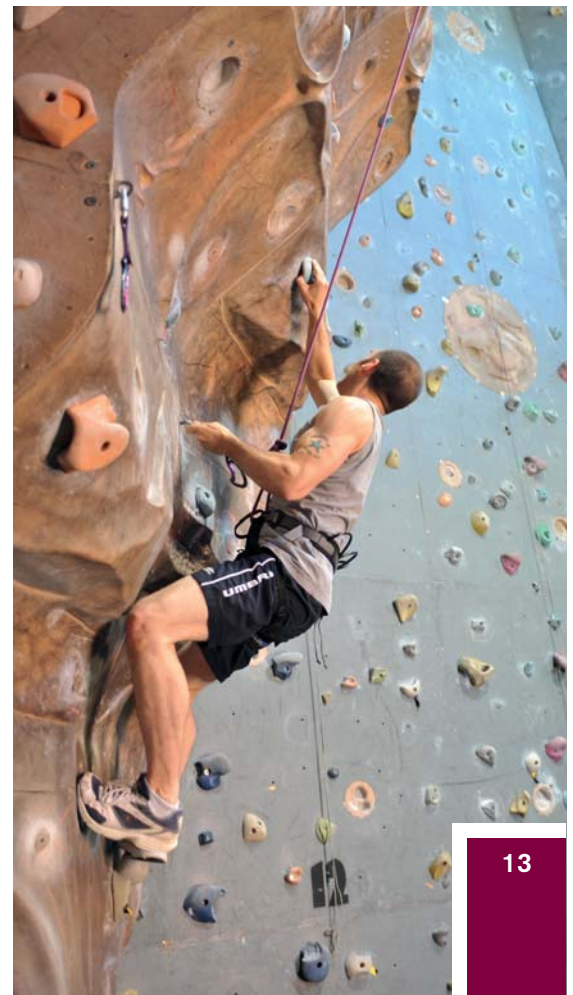
The University will expand the wireless network coverage on all campuses, improve off-campus access to resource and facilities and improve the resilience of the network and upgrade the e-mail service. There will be deployment of increased functionality across administrative systems with the new integrated human resources system and Planet FM for Estate Management.

The University will expand and enhance research facilities, including the refurbishment of outdated laboratories in Biological Sciences; the on-going renewal of science equipment; new investment in equipment for Language and Linguistics; and the development of a state-of-the-art media laboratory that will include 3D work linked to world-leading projects. The University will have an institutional repository for research outputs and information in place for 2010.

Cultural, sporting and residential facilities will also be enhanced. A new entrance to the Lakeside Theatre will provide greatly improved disabled access and a new catering outlet with views onto the lake, whilst development of the sports centre will include expanded fitness room facilities. New student accommodation is currently under construction at Southend and there are plans for further residential accommodation within the Knowledge Gateway.

In the development of all these projects the University will continue to monitor and reduce carbon emissions, focus upon its green agenda and monitor its performance against the sector. The University has a sustainability policy (www.essex.ac.uk/gtf/) promoting models for healthy and sustainable living. The Green Task Force seeks to reduce the costs incurred by the University by improving waste, energy, transport and catering management, working with existing human resources and enthusiasms.

A list of projects in the capital investment plan is available online at: (www.essex.ac.uk/strategy/cpi/)



supporting theme two | expanding opportunities

Supporting Strategy Two – To maintain the diversity of the University’s student intake by enhancing access to all those able to benefit from its educational provision.

The University has a long-standing commitment to widening participation and access to higher education. Since its establishment in 1964, the University has actively encouraged and supported applicants from non-traditional routes, initially focusing on mature students and those with disabilities and more recently on raising awareness and aspirations and providing wider opportunities for other under-represented groups.

The University is proud of its diverse student community and aims to maintain this by continuing to provide access to higher education (either at the University’s campuses or partner colleges) for all those able to benefit from its educational provision. The University encourages applications from all students who are able to demonstrate the potential to benefit from study at higher education level. Individual applicants are considered on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic background, family circumstances, religious or political beliefs and affiliations or other irrelevant distinction.

The University recognises the need to tailor modes of teaching and learning to the diversity of student needs. Approaches and policies in relation to widening participation, learning and teaching and employability are integrated to provide effective support for student success across the range of student backgrounds and learning styles.

The University is committed to continuing to serve the eastern region by appealing to a broad student market through a wide range of differentiated provision across multiple campuses. The University’s strategic partnerships extend and deepen its regional presence and widen access to higher education by providing a range of high quality degree and sub-degree courses and study opportunities across Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. Partnership working has also enabled the University to deliver on other higher education priorities including social inclusion, knowledge transfer, skills training and regional economic development.

The access agreement can be found on the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) website: www.offa.org.uk



supporting theme three | staff

Supporting Strategy Three – To recruit staff from among the best available, to retain them and support them so they can perform to their full potential.

Through the Human Resources Strategy 2008-09 – 2011-12, the University aims to provide an effective framework that will enable the achievement of the strategic plan, while delivering a fair and supportive working environment.

Key areas to address are:

- Remuneration and fair employment.
- Staff recruitment and retention.
- Size and composition of the workforce.
- Staff development and skills needs.
- Leadership, involvement and change management.
- Occupational Health, staff welfare and health and safety.
- Performance management: linking people management to organisational performance.
- Quality and diversity.

The key objectives are:

- To develop the reward, recognition and promotion processes in a way that reflects performance and allows the University to compete effectively in local, national and international labour markets.
- To provide accurate and up-to-date staff management information to inform effective decision-making at all levels.
- To develop a performance management framework.
- To develop an internal communications strategy to promote effective two-way communication channels at all levels.

Further information can be found in the Human Resources Strategy (www.essex.ac.uk/personnel/pol&proc).



supporting theme four | management and governance

Supporting Strategy Four – To ensure that the University is soundly governed, to take effective decisions on the basis of timely and appropriate information, and to implement decisions on the basis of consultation and effective communications.

In achieving its aims it is important that:

- The University has policies, procedures and governance arrangements that are equitable, transparent and implemented effectively to meet the requirements of external bodies and follow good practice elsewhere in the higher education sector.
- The effectiveness of the University's governance structures and arrangements are kept under regular review.
- Sound and reliable systems and indicators of performance are in place to manage and monitor performance against strategic objectives and finances, resources and risks.

In order to strengthen strategic management and financial accountability the University introduced a faculty structure, with the following objectives:

- Effectiveness – to improve the academic and financial performance of the University.
- Devolution – to devolve financial decision-making to the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors, bringing it closer to departments.
- Integration – to integrate the activities at Loughton and Southend.
- Support – to strengthen the link between the central administration and faculties/departments.
- Communication – to enhance communication between departments within the faculty.

The professional services play an important role in supporting good management and governance. More information can be found in the Professional Services Plan (www.essex.ac.uk/registrar/organisationadmin.shtm).



supporting theme five | regional

Supporting Strategy Five – To grow the University and to serve the Eastern region by appealing to a broad student market through a wide range of differentiated provision across multiple campuses.

The University is committed to its responsibilities to the eastern region as a higher education and research intensive institution and is an active participant in its continued development. We are an active participant in, and major resource for, the social, cultural and economic development of the eastern region. Through economic, cultural and political forums and partnerships, including the Haven Gateway and the Thames Gateway Partnerships, the University plays a major role in regional life making contributions that fit with its established traditions as well as its newer ambitions. The University will articulate this both internally and externally in ways that raise awareness and increase involvement.

The University serves the eastern region through its three campuses, in Colchester, Southend and Loughton, and in partnership with Colchester Institute, South Essex College, Writtle College and University Campus Suffolk (a joint venture with the University of East Anglia).

We aim to meet the needs and demands of a broad student market and a mixed regional economy through wide ranging and differentiated provision across multiple campuses, and to make higher education available and accessible to local populations across the region.

Working with partner colleges, schools and employers from the public and private sectors the University aims to provide opportunities, widen participation, open progression pathways, and offer professional development.



Key Performance Indicators

strategic aims

performance indicators | research | strategic aim one

Performance Indicator	Measurement	Target or milestone
1.1 Ranking for research quality	REF outcomes	Top 10
1.2 Research funding	Research grant and contract income	Increase of 5% pa
1.3 Research Intensity	Proportion of research staff submitted to the REF	90% of eligible staff

performance indicators | student experience | strategic aim two

Performance Indicator	Measurement	Target or milestone
2.1 Student satisfaction	National Student Survey (NSS)	Overall satisfaction rate ¹ of 90% Mean satisfaction rate of 80% by 2013 Significantly improved NSS ranking (from 53rd)
	Student Satisfaction Survey (internal)	Improved satisfaction scores in all survey areas (88% overall satisfaction)
	Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)	High levels of satisfaction benchmarked against all universities
2.2 Employability	Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey data	70% graduate track employment or 'graduate prospects' 80% in graduate employment or further study
	Opportunities for skills development	Expansion of Frontrunner placements to 200 in steady state Implementation of credit-rated careers module by 2010-11
	Graduate entrepreneurship	Five graduate start up businesses per year
	Implementation of Personal Development Planning	Increased take up of e-portfolio
2.3 Student achievement	Successful completion of award	Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) performance indicator in upper quartile, in line with 1994 Group
	Good degrees (percentage awarded 1st or 2:1)	HESA performance indicator in line with national benchmark

¹ % of positive responses to question 22 'overall I am satisfied with the quality of the course'.

performance indicators | knowledge transfer | strategic aim three

Performance Indicator	Measurement	Target or milestone
3.1 Knowledge transfer (KT) activity and income	KT income	Increase in income of 10% over 3 years to 2011, followed by a review of income targets to 2013
	Academic staff engaged with KT, enterprise and outreach activities	Increase to 25% by 2011
3.2 Business interaction	Occupation of Business Incubation Centre in Southend	Recruitment of tenants as scheduled with an average of 85% occupancy to be achieved by 2011
3.3 Knowledge Gateway	Progress with infrastructure	Physical infrastructure completed by summer 2013 Institute for Democracy and Conflict Resolution in place by 2013

performance indicators | global | strategic aim four

Performance Indicator	Measurement	Target or milestone
4.1 Internationalisation	Development of a new International Strategy	Strategy in place by 2010
4.2 Market share and growth	Development of International Marketing Plan including recruitment activity from key markets	At least 35% of students from beyond the UK, and at least 20% from more than 120 countries. A maximum of 8% of our total student population from any one overseas country
	Effectiveness of recruitment process	Improved conversion from enquiry to registration
4.3 International collaboration	Progress with new international strategic alliance in relevant countries	Five members by 2013
	Progression arrangements / joint programmes leading to student recruitment	Consolidation and review of existing progression agreements
4.4 League table position	Ranking in international and national league tables	<i>Times Higher Education</i> world ranking-top 200 Top 30 position in national tables

performance indicators | finance | strategic aim five

Performance Indicator	Measurement	Target or milestone
5.1 University financial health	Surplus	5% of turnover, broken down as 3% strategic investment, 1% long-term maintenance, 1% contingency
	Liquidity days	Hold sufficient cash to fund at least 25 days of average expenditure
	Affordability of debt servicing	Operating cash inflow to exceed net debt servicing costs (=principal+interest paid – interest received)
	Ratio of staff costs to income	In line with 1994 Group
	Growth of income	5% pa
5.2 Financial health of core academic activities	Financial performance of faculties	Combined faculty position to achieve at least break even
5.3 Diversification	Other operating income plus Research grant income as a % of total income	Improving trend towards 1994 Group average
	Income from fundraising activity	£6m over planning period (to 2012-13)
5.4 Strategy	Capital investment plan linked to financial strategy	Progress as scheduled
	New Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC)-based and forward looking departmental and faculty income and expenditure models	Progress as scheduled
5.5 Student numbers	Growth in fte at University campuses, partner colleges and UCS	Growth by 2012-13 to Campuses 10,800 Partners 4,200 UCS 4,600

Key Performance Indicators

supporting strategies

performance indicators | facilities | supporting strategy one

Performance Indicator	Measurement	Target or milestone
6.1 Estates enhancement	Progress with capital investment plan	Completion of current projects to schedule and budget
	Functionality of buildings	Proportion of building in Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) categories A and B for functionality better than sector median (Estate Management Statistics (EMS) 2008-09)
6.2 Estates Management	Maintenance spend	Maintenance costs per m ² GIA consistent with sector median (EMS)
6.3 Environment	Carbon emissions	Carbon emissions per m ² below legislative limits and sector mean
		Achievement of Green Task Force objectives
6.4 Security	Number of reported incidents on campuses	Recorded incidents decrease year on year
6.5 Information communication technology (ICT) facilities and services	Service availability and quality	Service availability at 99.9% 09:00 to 18:00 during term (all campuses)
		ICT spend per student in line with 1994 Group institutions (UCISA data)
		Student satisfaction with ICT provision (NSS q17) relative to 1994 Group
6.6 Library	SCONUL indicators - quality and accessibility of library resources	Investment (space and library expenditure) in line with 1994 Group
		Library management: >50% spent on books; high ranking for stock provision and usage

performance indicators | expanding opportunities | supporting strategy two

Performance Indicator	Measurement	Target or milestone
7.1 Student diversity	Recruitment of students from state schools, low participation neighbourhoods and from social classes 4 to 7 Progression of students from low participation neighbourhoods and mature students with no prior higher education experience	Continued recruitment above benchmark (HEFCE PIs)
7.2 Support for students from a range of backgrounds	Progress against Access Agreement	Targets met on spend on bursary provision (and on other financial support for students) and on outreach activities
7.3 Equal treatment of students and staff regardless of race, ethnic or national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic background, family circumstances, religious or political beliefs and affiliations or other irrelevant distinction	Progress of University Equality Schemes	Achievement of targets in the Equality Schemes and Action plans

performance indicators | staff | supporting strategy three

Performance Indicator	Measurement	Target or milestone
8.1 Staff turnover and absence	Retention and turnover	Within 2% of the sector average based on benchmarking data
	Sickness and absence (new policy and systems)	Reduction in absenteeism
8.2 Equality	Fairness of recruitment and promotion procedures	Achievement of equal opportunities targets
8.3 Staff development	Training needs analysis and evaluation of impact	Staff Development provision to be more clearly aligned with identified organisational need
8.4 Performance	Embedding of performance development review (PDR)	Revised PDR in place for 2010 and linked to identification of training and development needs
8.5 Welfare and Safety	Health and safety records, information and training	Reduction in number of accidents and near misses
	Welfare	Reduction in work-related ill-health
8.6 Staff satisfaction	Results of staff survey	Demonstrable improvement in response rates and results

performance indicators | management and governance |

supporting strategy four

Performance Indicator	Measurement	Target or milestone
9.1 Governance	Effectiveness of governance structures	Implement review of effectiveness of Council, reporting July 2010
9.2 Leadership and management	Management and leadership of new ventures	Delivery of strategic plan, in particular management of external partnerships
	Effectiveness of University planning processes	Implement and review new faculty planning process
9.3 Management information	Reliability and robustness of statutory data returns and quality assurance data (staff and students), including at partner colleges	External audit confirmation Implement data sharing with partner colleges
	Effective, reliable Management Information	Delivery of new financial management system and new procurement policy
		Online key performance indicator reports at University and faculty/department level

performance indicators | regional | supporting strategy five

Performance Indicator	Measurement	Target or milestone
10.1 University of Essex Southend Campus	Continued expansion of the Southend Campus	Delivery of growth in student numbers and income as per faculty plans
10.2 University Campus Suffolk (UCS)	Student number growth	Growth in student numbers in line with UCS strategic plan
10.3 Health	Development of a new Health Strategy	New health strategy approved by spring 2010
10.4 Partner colleges and affiliations	Recruitment to Essex-validated courses	By 2012-13 South Essex College - 940 Colchester Institute - 1,250 Writtle College - 950 Tavistock - 65 Kaplan - 1,000
10.5 Image and branding	Increased positive awareness and impact of 'University of Essex', 'Essex', and 'Colchester' brands	Roll out of new brand by end 2009 Launch 50th Anniversary campaign in 2010
10.6 Recruitment home/EU (Colchester/Loughton/Southend)	Recruitment of home and EU and, in particular, local students	Recruit to target (modest growth) Increase selectivity and quality of intake
	Improved conversion from enquiry to registration	Details of target under review

About this document

This document was produced in consultation with the University community and was approved by the University's Council in November 2009. It has been submitted to the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

The Strategic Plan will be updated on a three year cycle; the next major revision taking place in 2012.

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