



CITY UNIVERSITY  
LONDON

City Vision  
— 2016 —





*Imagine 2016*

**City University London:** A leading global University committed to academic excellence, focused on business and the professions and located in the heart of London. We are proud of the quality of our education, research and enterprise and are ranked within the top 2% of universities in the world.

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## INTRODUCTION

**C**ity University London is a special place. With skill and dedication, we have used education, research and enterprise to transform the lives of our students, our community and the world. We now have an opportunity to transform ourselves. We can make the strategic move that would put City on track to be among the world's best universities within a generation.

This document is about that strategic move and where we would aspire to be, not in a generation but in the next five years.

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## 1 CITY'S 2016 AMBITION

For over a century we have differentiated ourselves successfully on the basis of (i) our focus on business and the professions and (ii) the benefits of our central London location. In recent years we have also increased the internationalisation of our students, our staff and our outlook. Our courses are popular, our graduates are highly employable and we are financially sound. However, continuing as we are will not enable us to compete consistently on the basis of quality.

If we want to shape the future and attract and develop the most promising students and outstanding staff then we must internationalise further, while strengthening the quality of our education, research and enterprise and increasing the satisfaction of our students. This will enable City to move to a position where we can differentiate ourselves *uniquely* and convincingly on the basis of:

- (i) our commitment to academic excellence;
- (ii) our focus on business and the professions;
- (iii) the benefits of our central London location.

This Vision provides the direction and framework for us to make such a transformation by 2016, our fiftieth birthday as a University. A Strategic Plan will plot the course from where we are to where we aspire to be.

## 2 CITY'S VALUES

Our values acknowledge our history, rich heritage and cosmopolitan culture and provide the foundation on which our future is built. We value *excellence, creativity, innovation* and *interdisciplinarity*. We have an attitude that is *professional, ethical, friendly* and *inclusive*, a collegial environment of *equality* and *mutual respect* and while committed to our home in London, have an outlook that is truly *global*.

We believe that education of the highest quality is provided by academic staff who are passionate about their subject, engage with it through high-quality research and enterprise and bring the excitement and up-to-date experience of that engagement back to our students.



# CITY'S VISION

Higher Education operates as a 'positional good' in which lifetime advantages are offered to students, staff and stakeholders on the basis of a university's academic standing. To increase such advantages universities seek to increase their academic reputation. They do this by strengthening, in complex and interrelated ways, their *human capital* (knowledge, skills, alignment and energies of everyone in the university); *intellectual capital* (internationally excellent academic staff); *relationship capital* (networks of academics, professionals, friends and alumni) and *reputational capital* (brand and market standing). How City will make progress in all four of these areas will be described in our Strategic Plan.

We must set a clear and unambiguous Vision of our future and prioritise the defining characteristic of all great universities - academic excellence in a global context.

In **2016** City University London will be described as follows:

**A leading global University committed to academic excellence, focused on business and the professions and located in the heart of London. We are proud of the quality of our education, research and enterprise and are ranked within the top 2% of universities in the world.<sup>1</sup>**

This Vision is *inspiring* and *stretching* yet *credible*, as it positions us within London, with the academic calibre of a typical '94 Group' university but with an externally-referenced professional credibility. Such characteristics would suggest a performance within the top 25 of UK universities<sup>2</sup>. It is a distinctive position that is *difficult* to *emulate* as the new university sector cannot readily commit to comprehensive levels of academic excellence and the old university sector cannot readily adapt and innovate to meet the ever-changing needs of business and the professions. Additionally, a leading global university with the combination of academic excellence, business and the professions and central London location is reinforced and enhanced by our unique relationship with the City of London.

In the student market this will be read as 'academic reputation plus employability', a position with appeal today but even greater appeal in a post-2012 funding environment. It is also *sustainable*, as *high* institutional costs and *high* fees will not be possible without *high* quality; although investment in people, IT and (later) buildings will be needed to get us there. For this position to be viable we must continue to listen very carefully to our students and enhance student life and student satisfaction through relevant curricula, stimulating learning environments and the use of cutting-edge educational technologies.

The Vision challenges us to develop and strengthen:

- (i) the *quality* of our education, research and enterprise and the satisfaction of our students;
- (ii) institutional as well as student-centred *internationalisation*;
- (iii) our academically-led *organisational processes*.

<sup>1</sup> Times Higher Education World University Rankings

<sup>2</sup> The Times Good University Guide

## 4 CITY'S RATE OF TRANSFORMATION

Many universities have travelled the 'academic excellence' road successfully. However, they invested and made their 'transformations' over a decade or more, whereas we are proposing a similar move in less than half that time. Our assessment is that this speed of transformation is possible given our many advantages, notably:

- a credible and distinctive Vision;
- considerable academic talent distributed throughout the University;
- a history of being commercially aware, outward-facing and service-orientated;
- established areas of academic excellence which we can develop for the Research Excellence Framework in 2013 and beyond;
- supportive and very engaged staff with an appetite for positive change;
- the possibility of leveraging advantages offered by our international staff, students and profile in global educational markets;
- the ability to fund this transformation by investing our financial reserves.

Once City has reached its Vision it will be in a stronger position to plan for a longer-term future among the world's best universities. The transformation outlined here is a vital step on the road to that future.

## 5 NEXT STEPS

The two appendices that follow overleaf cover the potential risks and the shape our Strategic Plan may take.



Professor Paul Curran  
Vice-Chancellor, City University London  
March 2011







## APPENDIX 1

### RISKS

This Vision (and the Strategic Plan to achieve it) will put us in a strong position. The major risks (prior to any mitigation) are, in no particular order:

- By 2016 we may not have reached our Vision but our actions will have brought us close to it.
- It will be difficult to obtain an organisational and cultural balance between a federation of Schools and a single University.
- We lose sight of what has made us distinctive and successful to date.
- A commitment to academic excellence may be perceived as weakening our focus on business and the professions.
- Internationalisation may be perceived as weakening our commitment to London.
- The expectation of a close engagement between academic staff and their subject (via research and enterprise) will be unsettling for those recruited to teach their subject.
- We may be unable to develop and recruit academic staff of the quality we require.
- In the short-term we need to invest around half our financial reserves in people, IT and (later) buildings.
- We will also need to start to plan to invest a similar sum, if we are to develop an estate comparable with our 2016 academic standing.
- There will be turbulence at City in academic year 2012/13 and to a lesser extent in 2011/12 and 2013/14 as the Strategic Plan is prepared and implemented.
- While we do not have the management systems and infrastructure to support such a transformation these must be in place by the end of 2011.
- We are making this transformation at a time of great change in the sector and so will need to remain nimble.
- We must ensure that our five-year Strategic Plan is sustainable in the context of our generational aspirations.

We will propose relevant mitigations as part of our Strategic Plan.



## APPENDIX 2

# CITY'S EMERGING STRATEGIC PLAN

While providing a clear destination (*leading global University*) and direction (*academic excellence*) each School and Professional Service will see their own challenges within this Vision.

To prepare for the development and the 2012 implementation of our Strategic Plan we will clarify and make more specific the *general* actions that flow from this Vision. We can assume that we will continue, as now, to be a well-managed institution with sound standards, sound finance and a commitment to the needs and satisfaction of our students, staff and stakeholders and our widening access and environmental agendas. We can also assume that we can develop common and academically-led procedures across the University.

What follows is an *indicative*, rather than comprehensive, list of those *general* actions, as they indicate what we will need to do in order to achieve our Vision. A final list of actions will be contained within our Strategic Plan.

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## Education

- We will continue to direct student numbers towards our strongest courses and away from our weakest and innovate to strengthen our provision in domestic and international markets.
- We will maintain our current range of qualifications but will seek to re-balance from lower level (e.g. diploma and foundation degree) to higher level (e.g. honours degree, masters and doctoral).
- We will continue to increase entry tariffs to our undergraduate degrees (as we move towards a 400 tariff point entry).
- We will shift the institutional emphasis from academic staff teaching hours to student learning.
- We will improve the quality of our students' experience.
- We will continue to listen carefully to our students and further increase our measured student satisfaction.

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## Research

- We will recruit academic staff with international levels of research standing.
- We will place great stress on preparations for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise in November 2013 as a means of concentrating our resources both now and in the future, on international levels of research excellence.
- We will increase significantly our income from research and the proportion derived from the Research Councils.
- We will increase significantly the number of doctoral students (as we move towards an average of one doctoral student per academic staff member).
- We will build on our strength in interdisciplinary research, particularly in areas that relate to major global issues.

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## Enterprise

- We will develop our profitable enterprise activities.
- We will prioritise consulting, high-level CPD and the commercialisation of our intellectual property.

## Internationalisation

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- We will build on the internationalisation that has followed in the wake of our London location and discipline mix to develop a more systematic and overtly international approach to our activities.
- We will broaden our range of international connections through strategic partnerships in order to strengthen both our education and research.
- We will use the World Cities World Class university network to enhance international research collaboration and promote the exchange of students and staff.
- We will further develop our activities in transnational education.

## Human Resources

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- We will invest in people as the primary means of driving this transformation.
- We will align the recruitment, grading, support, progression and promotion of academic staff with best practice in the sector.
- We will move to a position where the vast majority of our academic staff are both trained in research and active in research at international levels of excellence.
- We will design and implement a Professional Services structure to support our academic aspirations.

## IT

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- We will bring our IT provision for education, research and academic administration to ‘sector leading’ in critical areas of our provision and ‘sector average’ in remaining areas.

## Estate

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- We will create the quality of space required to make this transformation by reducing the maintenance backlog as quickly as possible.
- We will develop an Estate Strategy as part of the Strategic Plan.
- We will plan for the buildings we need to move forward from 2016.

## Marketing & Communications

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- We will strengthen our marketing and communications: internally and externally, physically and electronically, locally, nationally and internationally.
- We will develop a strong Public Relations capacity.
- We will establish City University as a quality global brand.

## Development

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- We will use development activity to enhance our network of friends and alumni.

## Sustainability

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- We will continue our transition from a financially-led to an academically-led institution, both to achieve our Vision and because financial sustainability follows academic excellence rather than vice versa.
- We will invest in areas of academic strength and academic potential and disinvest in areas that do not align with our Vision.
- We will return to a position where we generate surpluses for investment.

## Governance & Structure

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- We will develop institution-wide clarity on the appropriate balance of collegial and corporate principles for effective governance, leadership and management.
- We will retain our current educational breadth, although there will be a need for reorganisation within some Schools, both to build on our strengths and respond to the market.
- We will be open, should the opportunity arise, to closer working and governance arrangements with other academic institutions in London.

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