

Keele



UNIVERSITY

# Our Future

Strategic  
Vision



Welcome to *Our Future*:  
A strategic vision for Keele

# Foreword

Keele University was founded more than 70 years ago to prepare our students for an uncertain, post-war world and to support wider society through research in partnership with others.

This ambition is as relevant and important now as it was then; though we are facing a different set of challenges and navigating new uncertainties.

Our new strategy for Keele gives an opportunity to re-state our purpose and founding commitments, as well as providing a road map for new directions that will ensure our future success.

*Our Future* is a living document that will evolve over the years to respond flexibly to the changing economic and HE landscape.

Our strategic plan is articulated through a clear sense of purpose and knowledge of what our performance needs to be to achieve this. Keele University has a strong sense of community. We recognise how our place in the UK partly defines us and what we do but that brings with it a determination to be global in outlook and international in action. Ultimately, our success comes from our people and the partnerships we forge, nurture and cherish.

## Purpose | People | Place | Partnerships | Performance

Our success in education and research will be underpinned by these – the five core tenets of our strategic plan – and our commitment to delivering the very best for all those who work, study and research at Keele. Our founding mission has not changed:

“Making a difference in society by providing innovative, high-quality education for students from all backgrounds and by undertaking world-leading research that transforms understanding and brings benefit to society, communities and individuals.”

This strategic vision provides an overview of the *Our Future* plan, which has been developed over many months with engagement from staff, students and graduates as well as wider partners and stakeholders. It will give us new confidence, agility and the ambition required to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities that lie ahead.

We look forward to working with you to deliver *Our Future* – a new chapter in the history of Keele University.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jo Williams".

Dame Jo Williams  
CBE, DBE  
Pro-Chancellor

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trevor McMillan".

Professor Trevor McMillan  
PhD, MRCP(Hon), FRCR(Hon), FRSB  
Vice-Chancellor

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# Our Future strategic vision

In delivering *Our Future* we will continue to harness the Keele Difference: a culture of engagement, inclusion and cohesion that allows a progressive view of the world to flourish and gives our staff, students and graduates the skills and opportunities to thrive.

*Our Future* was endorsed and approved by the University Council in May 2019. It sets out our strategic vision and aims to ensure that Keele has a planned and proactive approach to meet current and future challenges as well as being agile enough to respond to the shifting landscape.

Crucially, *Our Future* will underpin the key areas where we intend to invest and grow, alongside a consistent focus on driving efficiencies and sustainability.

We are developing a number of strategic projects that will move this strategy from the incremental to the transformative; shaping Keele to be fit for the future and moving us forward into one of the most important periods in the institution's long and successful history.

# Purpose

## Our mission is built on a belief in:

- The transformative capacity of a university education for individuals, communities and society;
- The importance of advancing knowledge through independent, high quality research and academic enquiry;
- The critical role of education and research in transcending national and social boundaries;
- Leadership in environmental sustainability as a critical behaviour to secure a sustainable future;
- Valuing and celebrating the rights, responsibilities, dignity, health and wellbeing of individuals through a living commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Proud of our heritage, we will take the spirit of Lord Lindsay's vision for Keele and reimagine it for the future. This will allow us to continue to deliver: innovative education that is conscious of the practical benefits it has for students; high quality, impactful research that is mindful of the benefits that it has to local communities and wider society; and a diverse, vibrant, tolerant and supportive university community that will enhance the experience of all who live and work at Keele and those who partner with us.



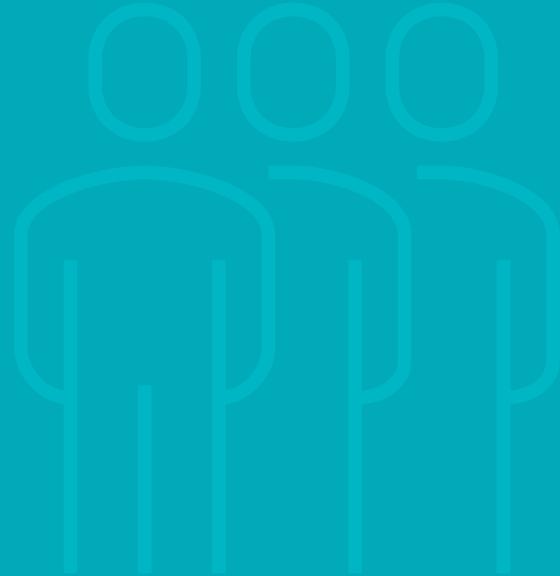
## We will be:

- A university that delivers a broad-base of innovative education as a means to develop individuals' strengths and flexibility for the future. Our students will see the world differently and stand out in their determination to make a positive difference; demonstrating this through their knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs in a tolerant, diverse society that delivers equality of opportunity.
- A university that educates professionals fit for a modern world through programmes that are designed by world-leading academics and practitioners who aim to educate students for their future. We will provoke our students to look to the future whilst establishing them firmly in the knowledge and needs of the present. Our students will not only enter the future workplace, they will create it.
- A propagator of world-class research and researchers that push at the limits of current knowledge and understanding; ensuring that the outputs have impact through our teaching, public engagement and the partnerships we form.
- An anchor higher education institution that makes a genuine and measurable difference to the health, culture and economy of our region.
- A beacon for environmental sustainability in how we live, work and play.

## Key enablers:

- The Keele Institute for Innovation and Teaching Excellence (KIITE) and an Education Vision; inspiring a portfolio and curriculum that is innovative, attractive and dynamic.
- Our flagship interdisciplinary Research Institutes in Global Health, Social Inclusion and Sustainable Futures.
- The New Keele Deal, Keele Deal | Culture and Keele Deal | Health re-affirming our civic leadership role and making real commitments to the futures of local communities.
- The Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences; as a focus for ensuring that we are examining key societal challenges.
- The provision of efficient, effective and excellent professional services that support academic colleagues and students in pursuing outstanding education and research.

# People



Keele's dynamic and supportive community is at the heart of its success. We will embrace with clear and uncompromising demand the fostering of working relationships that support, respect and nurture the Keele community.

We will celebrate the freedom of expression and activity that is afforded to an academic community, yet be accountable to each other and broader society for what we do and contribute to our communities.



## We will:

- Expect our staff, students and partners to live by the values of: collegiality, ambition, accountability, respect, fairness and consistency.
- Provide an exceptional student experience that celebrates the diversity of our backgrounds and experiences, informed by a vibrant and inclusive student voice.
- Be a university that recognises international staff and students as highly valued contributors to our community, enhancing the experience of all.
- Provide a safe, inclusive community for students and staff, which promotes a sense of belonging, good mental health and wellbeing and opportunities for students to contribute across the full spectrum of their academic, social and civic lives.
- Give all our staff the opportunity to develop the skills, tools and working practices to do their jobs. We recognise the diversity of our efficient, effective and talented staff as key to our success. Developing the digital literacy of both our staff and students and the ability to be agile, flexible and adaptive to changing needs and expectations.
- Engage with our alumni, as members of our university, to enhance the experience of past, present and future students.

## Key enablers:

- An effective two-way communication understanding between all members of the Keele community.
- A strong spirit of partnership and collaboration with the Keele University Students' Union and the Keele Postgraduate Association.
- A People Strategy and a Health and Wellbeing Strategy that provides the framework for our commitment and approach to supporting staff and student health and wellbeing, treating the mental health of our students as a matter of the highest priority. We will ensure that all colleagues feel valued and appropriately rewarded and supported.
- A strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, ensuring we translate our commitment into practice through the implementation of effective action plans.

# Place



We are justifiably proud of our campus and have a strong commitment to being an active critical regional anchor that is responsive to – and shows leadership for – our local communities.

The original remit for the University was to have a strong sense of place, in particular in relation to North Staffordshire and the City of Stoke-on-Trent. We will develop even further the civic role that we have to play in the private, public, cultural, energy and health economy around us.

We believe in the centrality of the campus to the Keele vision, but we will increasingly see the campus as a hub at the centre of a wide range of activities involving staff and students.



## We will:

- Aim for consistency of service and quality of experience for all students and members of staff, irrespective of where they are based and where they live and work.
- Have global perspectives that are essential if individuals and humanity in general are to thrive in a modern and inclusive society and if Keele is to thrive and to meet the local and global challenges it faces.
- Welcome more staff and students from overseas and widen our global perspective across research and education through collaboration with international universities.

## Key enablers:

- A well-structured campus masterplan that recognises the needs of the whole campus community and creates the routes for achieving the plan.
- An approach to transport that accommodates the needs of staff and students whilst also aligning to our sustainability goals.
- A digital first approach that facilitates access, learning, living and working.
- Meaningful relationships with key public sector organisations in the region that facilitate our role in Newcastle under Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.
- The recognition of the specific needs of students who live off campus or study with us via our online provision.
- Smart Energy Network Demonstrator (SEND) – the use of our campus as a demonstrator of best practice for environmental sustainability.
- A strategy of international engagement that supports a Keele influence around the world.

# Partnerships

To achieve our goals, we must be trustworthy and reliable members of meaningful partnerships – and we will continue to have partnerships that we can be proud of.

Our Keele Deals frame partnerships with significant organisations such as local authorities, businesses of all sizes, third-sector organisations, theatres, schools and colleges or with our local communities through our arts programme and outreach activities.



## We will:

- Partner with a wide range of people and organisations, on campus, and across the world.
- Carry out a large proportion of our research in cooperation with a range of organisations from business, charity, government, the NHS, local authorities, cultural sectors and directly with the public.
- Support our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes through long-term educational partnerships which enable our students to gain essential experiential learning alongside, or as part of their studies, and a graduate level of employment when they leave us.
- Develop a Keele Deal | Health with partners to reaffirm, enhance and expand our education and research activity and strengthen our position in promoting improved health and wellbeing in our communities.

## Key enablers:

- Achieving our ambition of seeing the majority of our student body experience a placement, internship or employment-related experience during their studies.
- Enhancing the value and relevance of our educational portfolio through input from our students, graduates and employers into the design of courses and their delivery.
- A coordinated effort to develop a suite of international partnerships critical for research, international student recruitment, and maintaining a diverse community on campus, and for the overall reputation of the University.
- The development of strong principles and processes that make clear our approach and commitment to working with a wide range of partners.
- Close working partnerships with our students and staff.

# Performance



Achieving long-term success means that we must be recognised as a highly ranked university, one that undertakes world-class research – which has significant impact within the academy and beyond – undertaken in the context of an exceptional educational experience for our students.

Our research performance is a key contributor to our reputation as an institution of significance in the field of postgraduate endeavor and it must remain at the heart of our future plans.

Our success will depend on our world-class researchers, how we support them and how we actively collaborate across and beyond the campus in significant and collaborative research programmes.



## We will:

- Compare ourselves to others but do this with a clear sense of our unique position in higher education in the UK.
- Not obsess over league tables but use external evaluations wisely to learn from comparisons in order to enhance and promote our own performance and deliver a strong positioning in the sector.
- Use the Research Excellence Framework (REF) as an important evaluation of our progress and performance in the pursuit of the highest quality of research, measured in both the eyes of our peers and those benefiting from our work across the world.
- Increase income to support our research and the development of our postgraduate researcher community which will play an important role in the measures we develop to assess the achievement of our research ambitions.
- Evaluate our performance in education through a combination of externally benchmarked metrics – and in more detailed evaluation by KIITE – of student satisfaction and outcomes plus the nature of changes in teaching practice.

## Key enablers:

- Deploy a Student Engagement approach, which will heighten the detail and rigor of our data on educational engagement.
- The evaluation and demonstration of value for money in all that we do.
- A financial plan which will underpin our long-term sustainability. This will deliver a level of performance that reduces our vulnerability to external pressures; enables adequate funding for core university activities and provides headroom for investment in a competitive student experience and a world-class research environment.
- A principle that workloads should be fair and equitable across the University and that all staff are supported to fulfil their potential.
- Improved research performance, resulting in increased research income after the 2021 REF.
- Transformation of our professional support processes in order to deliver effective and consistent support across the University. We will be innovative and flexible, ensuring our governance and decision-making structures empower progress whilst maintaining our high standards.

# Delivery

We know that the successful delivery of *Our Future* will require robust governance processes, accountability and courage to make complex and sometimes difficult decisions.

We are committed to achieving the aims of *Our Future* through the following aligned and underpinning visions and strategies and delivery against their specific action:

- Education
- Research
- Student Experience
- People
- International
- Financial Sustainability
- Estates
- Digital
- Environmental Sustainability

A number of Project Executive Groups (PEGs) have already been formed comprising a range of expertise and representation from across the University.

These are responsible for driving success in our key areas, guided by the core tenets of Purpose, People, Place, Partnerships and Performance.

## More information

For more information about our plans or to request a copy of the strategic vision in an alternative format please visit [keele.ac.uk](http://keele.ac.uk) or contact the Vice-Chancellors office at:

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70  
YEARS  
*of the*

KEELE DIFFERENCE

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