

Daring to be Different

University of the Highlands and Islands

Strategic Plan 2021-2025

Our approach

The University of the Highlands and Islands is a new, progressive and innovative University.

We are a partnership of independent colleges and research institutions covering the largest geographical area of any campus-based university or college in the UK. We have the largest student body in Scotland, with almost 40,000 studying with us each year, and we contribute £560 million annually to the region, indirectly supporting 6,200 jobs. As a multiplier effect, the university puts back £4 for every £1 spent into the economies of the Highlands and Islands, Moray and Perthshire.

This strategic plan represents the start of our third chapter. The university partnership is at a critical point in its history; its current strategic plan is being refreshed; it is operating in an intensely competitive and dynamic higher education and research environment, and we face an uncertain future with COVID-19.

Our university's aspirations extend beyond the place-based education we have in our regions and communities and embrace a 'daring to be different' ethos. This ethos will harness our energy and set new ambitions in our areas of strength, namely: tertiary education, research impact, enterprise and engagement.

The Daring to be Different strategic plan signals a shift in thinking, one for which our partnership is well prepared, and sets an ambition of becoming more engaged with our communities and more enterprising in our activity.

Professor Todd Walker

Principal and Vice-Chancellor
University of the Highlands and Islands

Our framework

Our strategic and planning framework identifies areas of improvements around a common set of shared values. While based on the 7S McKinsey Framework, it has been adapted to suit the future needs of UHI. The UHI Framework assesses the current state and compares it to a desired state. It implies that the University partnership will be going through an organisational change aligned with an agreed overarching strategy and vision. It captures our intent to see students grow and succeed whatever the stage of their learner journey.

The framework is summarised below:

UHI Strategic Framework 2021-25				
MISSION	To have a transformational impact on the prospects of our region, its economy, its people and its communities			
VISION	To become a connected, streamlined and sustainable university			
BRAND STORY	<i>A university of today for the world of tomorrow</i>			
CORE VALUES	Collaboration	Openness	Respect	Excellence
STAKEHOLDERS	Staff Students Alumni Business Government Community Industry			
STRATEGIC PILLARS	Tertiary Education We will deliver a connected curriculum built on personalising the learner journey with more content, to more people through more channels	Research Impact We will enhance our research impact ensuring it is internationally ranked, industry linked and world-leading	Enterprise We will embrace an entrepreneurial spirit based on strong economic and commercial growth, resulting in a socially responsible and well managed enterprise	Engagement We will be a connected organisation that pursues engagement with the people and the communities in which we work always striving for mutual benefit
OPERATIONAL PLANS	Academic Plan Student Recruitment Plan International Plan	Research Plan Knowledge Exchange Plan Island Plan	Sustainability Plan People & Culture Plan Digital Enhancement Plan	Alumni & Advancement Plan Gaelic Plan HISA SPA Government Liaison Plan

The strategic framework explained

Our core values

Our values sit at the centre of our strategic planning framework. They represent the core beliefs upon which the University is based and reflect how we operate. We hold the institution and ourselves accountable to these values.

Collaboration	We value people working willingly and actively together on common tasks because we seek to be a more connected organisation.
Openness	We value an environment in which colleagues share ideas and communicate clearly. We aim to be approachable and encourage others to contribute and speak up and we ensure others feel their contribution is valued.
Respect	We value others in the workplace, are mindful of each other's capabilities, perspectives and backgrounds, and are thoughtful on our impact on others.
Excellence	We value a sense of purpose in our work by taking responsibility in our performance and behaviour, and we celebrate collectively in our achievements.

Our strategic pillars

Tertiary Education	To deliver a connected curriculum built on personalising the learner journey with more content, to more people, through more channels
Research Impact	To enhance our research impact, ensuring it is internationally ranked, industry linked and world-leading
Enterprise	To embrace an entrepreneurial spirit based on strong economic and commercial growth, resulting in a socially responsible and well managed enterprise
Engagement	To be a connected organisation that pursues engagement with the people and the communities in which we work, always striving for mutual benefit

Our objectives

Pillars	Goals	Outcomes by 2025¹
Tertiary Education	To become a destination of choice for new learners and ensure successful outcomes for current learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase the number of higher and further education students • To increase the number of international students • To recruit students from diverse backgrounds • To redesign our curriculum to be student-centred and focused on the student journey.
Research Impact	Increase our national and international standard of research and broaden our fields of research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To elevate our research strategy, ensuring it is internationally ranked, industry linked and world-leading • To broaden the fields of research, collaboratively or organically.
Enterprise	To streamline our business model to one that is sustainable and socially responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be a sustainable organisation • To demonstrate strong economic and commercial growth • To be a socially responsible and well managed enterprise
Engagement	To be acknowledged externally as a connected civic university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To receive formal acknowledgment of our engagement strategy • To be known as a civic university

¹ The outcomes are illustrative only. They will be populated once the Operational Plans have been written.

Our plans

The strategic pillars of the university (T.R.E.E.) are supported by a number of annually reviewed operational plans. Each operational plan will be designed with a common format - objectives, goals, actions and measures. Each plan will be linked to:

Objectives	A set of objectives required to meet the strategic aim of the pillar
Goals	A set of goals required to meet the specific objective
Actions	A course of actions required to activate the goal
Measures	A set of measurable endpoints that define the completion of the action and goal
Responsibilities	An accountable person or committee
Resources	The resources needed to deliver the measures and goals

At present it is proposed that the University will have the following operational plans:

Tertiary Education	Research Impact	Enterprise	Engagement
Academic Plan*	Research Plan	Sustainability Plan#	Alumni and Advancement Plan
Student Recruitment Plan	Knowledge Exchange plan	People and Culture Plan	Gaelic plan HISA Student partnership Agreement
International Plan	Island Plan	Digital Enhancement Plan	Government Liaison Plan

*Academic Plan: includes the current Curriculum Renewal Strategy, the Student Experience Plan and the current Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy.

#Sustainability Plan: includes the Financial Recovery Plan (UHI Blueprint) and Carbon Management Plan and Estates Strategy.