

People Strategy 2013-2018

‘To be an outstanding university at which to be a member of staff’

University of Worcester’s Strategic Plan 2013-2018

The Strategic plan (SP) for the period 2013-2018 sets out a fresh impetus and high ambitions for the people employed here.

**Make the most of the University’s most important resource: the people who work here**

The University of Worcester aims to be an outstanding university for all its staff, as well as for its students. Each member of staff has an important role to play in helping the University achieve the objectives in this Strategic Plan.

In return, the University is committed to supporting its staff in accordance with the values of the plan.

1. This strategy sets a framework for the development and implementation of policies that will deliver these objectives, support the mission and further embed the values. The future priorities will be used to form an action plan to accompany the strategy, and this will be monitored by the relevant committees and groups.

1. We will identify appropriate external standards against which the activities can be measured and further development areas identified. Existing measures include IiP, Best Companies, Stonewall employers’ index, Two ticks disability standards, and Mindful Employer.

1. The strategy covers a five year period and will be adapted to respond to the University’s changing needs through regular reviews. Reviews will take account of any emerging employment trends, local, national and EU legislation and best practice in human resource management and higher education.
2. There are six key themes set out below, and main aims have been proposed, with supporting expectations, commentary on current progress and a set of future priorities. The links to the SP are shown in the textboxes.

* Recruitment
* Reward and recognition
* Organisational and staff development
* Leadership and management of change
* Engagement and consultation
* Respect, wellbeing and sustainable communities

Recruitment

Seek to be an ‘Employer of Choice’ for good candidates

1. Members of staff of the University will be appointed to perform at a high level

This means they will be;

* + knowledgeable and with the relevant skills and aptitude for the role
  + able to demonstrate commitment to the values of the University during the appointment process, and throughout their career here
  + engaged in meaningful and fulfilling roles, and aware of the contribution of their role to the University’s aims
  + well informed about the mission and to be able to contribute to making the University an outstanding place in which to be a student
  + selected in accordance with best practice and in ways that enable them to show that they will be high performers who can work in collaboration with others in an interdisciplinary environment
  + able to demonstrate their teaching capability, and enthusiasm for engaging with students where the nature of the role involves teaching and supporting students
  + supported to work at a high level during the initial employment phase and throughout their career at the University

1. During the last five years the recruitment and selection of staff has been significant and over 50% of the current core staff of circa 900 have started in the this period. As our reputation has grown, we have been successful in attracting staff from an increasingly wide range of other universities, including internationally and from other sectors; this has brought valuable richness and diversity to the staffing. There have been some roles where it has been difficult to attract a sufficiently well qualified field, requiring re-advertisement or re-designing the post. Our staff turnover has enabled us to refresh and attract new people with new skills and abilities, without de-stabilising small teams.
2. There has been greater investment in the process for deciding staffing requirements through a transparent planning process, and a more strategic approach to recruitment campaigns. The website has been enhanced as a recruitment tool, and improvements made to the application process providing effective and efficient service to applicants and to appointing managers. Employment of students to ‘earn while they learn’ has increased markedly and proved popular.
3. We are already a major employer and will seek to increase the number of employment opportunities at the University and to help the region generate more wealth. However, it is uncertain if the recruitment activity over the next five years will be as high as the period 2007-2012; this will be affected by external factors as well as internal. There will be greater competition for staff within the sector, and from international higher education. We have increased the number of honorary and visiting appointments, and there is increasing interest from key professionals in the region who want to make a contribution to, and with, the University.
4. Future priorities will include
   1. to further develop the approach to planning for staffing, ensuring that strategic priorities are addressed and recruitment to support new and emerging subject areas is considered
   2. clearer articulation to applicants of the features that make the University an ‘outstanding place in which to be a member of staff’, and an ‘employer of choice’, drawing attention to non-financial benefits including support for relocation, including international
   3. the use of social media within the recruitment process and enhancements to the application process
   4. use of selection methods to provide a firm evidence base on which to make decisions, to consider ways of selecting people who understand and support the values of the University and demonstrate the skills needed for effective partnership working
   5. seeking ways to include students in the selection of academic staff and those roles that directly support students in other ways
   6. applicants for academic posts to be required to demonstrate inspirational teaching and learning, enthusiasm for engaging with students, and a commitment to their continuing professional development as teachers and scholars
   7. ensuring that new academic staff have proven research capabilities and evident potential to make a valuable contribution to the University’s research and knowledge exchange work
   8. ensuring the best practice for recruitment and career development of ‘sessional’ academic staff
   9. continue to promote the advantages of secondments, exchanges, honorary and visiting contracts with people in other organisations, where these are mutually beneficial, this will include international links
   10. enhanced induction for new staff and staff in new roles, including part time and sessional staff
   11. continue to promote the internal mentoring scheme and review the probation system to link it with appraisal
   12. further develop the opportunities for students to earn and learn within the University, taking into account the need for their induction and for them to be well- managed and led
   13. develop and apply the skills of members of staff in recruitment and selection to support employability initiatives that will benefit students

Reward and recognition

Celebrate and reward excellent individual and team performance through remuneration schemes that are transparent, accessible and fair

1. Members of staff will be rewarded and recognised for high performance

This means they will;

* + be recognised, rewarded and valued as individuals and in teams for achieving consistently high standards and for being innovative; remuneration schemes will be transparent, accessible and fair
  + have well-paid, stimulating and secure employment
  + have opportunities to seek non-financial as well as financial rewards
  + be invited to share good practice and celebrate success with others
  + be supported where poor/under performance is identified in ways that are appropriate to the situation

1. The single pay spine has continued to be applied, through the Local Pay Framework Agreement, and we have remained within the national pay bargaining arrangements. General increases have been low in recent years, and the contribution pay schemes have become increasingly well subscribed. We have increased the number of staff employed as researchers as research projects have been awarded. Changes to the distribution of staff along the pay spine have been monitored through the Equal Pay Group. Line managers have developed increased confidence in dealing with under-performance and there has been discussion to develop a common understanding of the standards of performance for members of staff. The award of Teaching Fellowships and application for National Teaching Fellowships has continued and been successful.
2. Future priorities will include;
   1. review of the criteria and process for contribution pay within the University to align with the new strategic plan and to explore ways of linking appraisal outcomes with remuneration
   2. review the decision to stay in the national bargaining system, especially as the changing funding methodology creates greater differentiation and competition between HEIs; the concept of national bargaining might no longer be appropriate
   3. taking into account the views of staff expressed in the Best Companies survey 2012 that the sense of ‘fair deal’ is declining, promote the non-financial aspects of the remuneration package and consider if enhancements can be made
   4. there are some ‘technical’ changes that will be made to the pay spine and increments dates
   5. review the grade levels of those in higher grades within the professional support staff
   6. to develop a career and grading pathway for staff engaged in, and supporting, research; postdoctoral research staff are a priority group
   7. revise the salary arrangements for senior staff and review the role of the Remunerations Committee of the Board
   8. develop further the shared understanding of what constitutes a high level of contribution by making further progress with the professional competencies/behaviours as set out in the Staff Professional Development Framework
   9. to develop the role for the holders of Teaching Fellowships to make an even greater contribution to supporting innovation in learning and teaching

Organisational and Staff development

Support staff to achieve the highest possible levels of professional attainment

Use annual performance and development appraisals to enhance effectiveness

1. Members of staff will have opportunities for professional and staff development to enhance their careers and performance, and to ensure that the organisation is able to respond rapidly to new and changing opportunities

This means that staff will;

* have the necessary knowledge, skills, expertise and commitment to support inspirational teaching and learning for those with academic roles and others who support learning
* be engaged with advanced scholarship, professional practice and research; this applies to academic staff and those whose professional expertise is important for the effective functioning of the University
  + - have a framework for development that will help them to identify, acquire, maintain, improve and broaden their capabilities, knowledge and skills at all stages of their careers in the University.
    - engage with annual performance and development appraisals
    - be encouraged to reflect, evaluate and record their participation in staff development and have routes to formal accreditation for some of that activity.
    - have opportunities for support staff to increase their level of professionalisation within their field of employment and to make an increased contribution to learning, teaching and research

1. Staff development opportunities have been provided to meet the needs of individuals, groups and institution- wide priorities. These are still positively valued by staff according to feedback and participation levels have increased in the last twelve months. There has been some accreditation of programmes in the area of leadership and management. We have reviewed the UK Professional Standards (UKPS) of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) as applied to learning and teaching roles, and considered the VITAE framework for researchers. The appraisal scheme has been modified and a more radical review has resulted in a revised scheme that has been tested in some areas. Secondments and exchanges have taken place, albeit in a few cases, but the value of these as staff development and engagement with practice has been recognised.

1. Future priorities will include;
   1. clearer definition of the staff development framework mapped with the provision that will enhance career development
   2. a new appraisal scheme with an increased emphasis on performance/contribution as well as development needs; this will include a pilot scheme of 360degree feedback for those who are managers and leaders
   3. re-balancing of resources and arrangements for staff development to recognise that investment in staff development will be a key strategic priority for the period 2013-2018
   4. improve the processes to capture staff development needs to better inform the agencies that make arrangements to meet the needs
   5. ensuring that all academic staff have in place a rolling four-year plan for the progressive development of their research, scholarship and knowledge exchange work and that there is support to deliver these plans
   6. commitment to the UKPS for those delivering and supporting learning and teaching and encouragement to obtain HEA accreditation
   7. development of a research career pathway, building on the REF legacy and adopting the VITAE framework
   8. opportunities for staff to engage on a global level, through exchanges and secondments with international partners

Leadership and management of change

Develop in our staff an appreciation of, and capacity for, inspirational leadership

Build the University’s capacity for excellent and effective leadership by developing high calibre internal candidates who will be able to compete for senior positions in open competition with external candidates

Review continuously our internal management and governance structures to ensure that they are effective and streamlined

1. Members of staff will be well led, inspired to innovate and supported during change

This means they will;

* be encouraged, supported and enabled to develop and apply leadership skills and to reflect on their own development and that of others
* work in a culture that places value on independent thinking and action, be inspired and equipped to innovate
* be expected and encouraged to consider how ways of working can be improved through a process of critical reflection and evaluation of current practice
* be supported during the change process with clear communication, timely and purposeful training and development, and a supportive network for people who are experiencing change.
* manage others within the context of University employment policies, applying these consistently and equitably
* be informed about the progress of the strategy; this includes those who lead and manage staff, and all who are employed

1. Leadership development programmes have taken place with the aim of building capacity and confidence. A new programme for ‘Developing leaders’ has taken place and is due for evaluation. Coaching continues to be popular and coaches are gaining higher levels of expertise; external coaching has been provided in some cases. Major change programmes have included The Hive, Curriculum 2013, and firstpoint, plus several enhancements to systems that have made a difference to effectiveness and efficiency, providing evidence of innovation and evaluation of practice. Support during and post-change has been provided, this includes staff in The Hive.
2. Staff development activities and casework have provided opportunities to ensure that policies and procedures are applied appropriately and consistently. Information on key dimensions of the University’s staff has been made available for those who lead and manage.
3. Future priorities will include;
   1. evaluation of impact of investment in leadership programmes
   2. further leadership development programmes with the aim of building capacity with aspiring leaders; this will include external and internal programmes
   3. increasing the availability of coaching as a means of enhancing performance, for coachees and coaches and to increase the number of people who are externally accredited as coaches
   4. evaluating recent change management programmes e.g. The Hive in order to learn for future programmes
   5. staff development to encourage creative and critical review of current systems in order bring about more effective and efficient ways of working
   6. increased provision of management information about staff
   7. contribution salary scheme to be clearer about the reward for innovation, and greater awareness raising about the awards made and the rationale

Engagement and consultation

Work in partnership with staff to ensure that organisational changes are widely understood and well managed

Work positively with staff and their representatives, to address concerns and wherever possible to achieve

mutually agreed solutions and actions

1. Members of staff will be encouraged to be engaged in their work, be consulted and informed and

* understand how their role contributes to the achievement of the University’s objectives
* be able to express their views and have the opportunity to engage in consultative processes
* be employed in an environment that is supportive and friendly
* work in ways that support partnerships and encourage external engagement

1. There has been extensive consultation during the development of the new strategic plan and the IiP assessment process in 2011 identified that members of staff were clear about the institution’s objectives. All departments/institutes have ‘away days’ and team briefing sessions. Attendance at the VC’s all staff meetings has been high and participation in the form of questions has increased. The JCC continues to meet and concerns addressed through the agenda and by meetings of ‘interest groups’ when specific issues arise. Internal communications using the web and other media has increased; there has been a focus on staff and student achievements to celebrate success and to encourage others. Feedback from various sources indicates that the expansion of the University has been accompanied by perpetuation of the ethos of friendliness and support; there was a risk that expansion would lead to a sense of anonymity.
2. The University has a strong commitment to working in partnership with other organisations in order to provide high quality educational opportunities. This requires staff in academic and professional support areas to be aware of the requirements for effective partnerships, and to develop mechanisms for creating and sustaining these important relationships.
3. Future priorities will include;
   1. continue to encourage staff to participate in the governance and management processes through membership of committees and groups, including short term working groups
   2. clear statements from teams and individuals about how they intend to help to deliver new strategic plan for 2013-2018
   3. communication internally and, where appropriate, externally University plans for, and achievements in, developing the University
   4. identification of the skills required for effective partnerships with other organisations, to be addressed through staff development
   5. the new appraisal scheme will show a ‘line of sight’ from individuals’ objectives to the institutional aims
   6. a survey of staff opinion, either as part of the Best Companies accreditation, or as a separate activity
   7. review the role of the Joint Consultative Committee, Diversity and Equality Committee and Health Safety and Wellbeing committees and increase the dissemination of their activities to a wider audience
   8. renewed emphasis on ways to enhance and evaluate employee engagement through leadership programmes and other activities
   9. training for staff to act as facilitators for team briefings and away days

Respect, well-being and sustainable communities

Provide a working environment in which people are included and respected and where health and well-being are assured

Enhance equality and diversity policies and adopt best practice

1. Members of staff will work in an environment where people are included and respected, their wellbeing is enhanced, they are encouraged to make a contribution to the wider community and they can keep some form of engagement with the University after leaving employment

This means that members of staff will;

* + - be treated and treat others with respect and dignity,
    - take into account the potential for members of minority groups, both staff and students, to have experienced disadvantage, and to take steps to help to mitigate the impact of this
    - have physical facilities that are increasingly environmentally sustainable
    - work in ways that are environmentally sustainable through increasing awareness, information and staff development
    - have the opportunity to achieve a positive work-life balance through flexibility in working patterns
* be encouraged to serve on boards and committees which manage and govern local, regional and national organisations, steering policy and providing advice.
* be encouraged to consider themselves as members of the University, with a sense of loyalty and belonging as well as responsibilities and privileges; the right to be heard, to respect; the responsibility to listen to and respect the views of others; and the privilege of belonging to a university with a reputation as a friendly place in which people are valued.
* be invited to provide feedback when they leave the employment of the University, and in this way contribute to improvement in policies and practices, and to retain some form of engagement after leaving

1. We have developed and published an Equality Framework that sets out aims and objectives for the next four years. This is being monitored through the Diversity and Equality Committee. There has been a major revision of the policy on bullying and harassment, plus training and development to implement. We have invested in training for internal mediators, and there is mandatory training for all new staff in diversity and equality matters. Facilities have been enhanced through opening of The Hive, The Arena, Riverside, Peirson; all have sustainability as a key criterion. On-going audit of sustainability activity shows that we are working effectively to increase our carbon reduction. We continue to support staff with carer-roles and health-related reasons for flexible working. Parental leave continues to be popular and there is a good record of people returning to work following periods of leave. There is in place a plan for enhancing wellbeing for staff and students.
2. The principles and processes for allocating workloads for academic activity are under review and there are proposals to revise some aspects of the current arrangements. Transparency of process and of outcome will be ensured and the aim is for a balanced portfolio that supports the career development of the member of staff.
3. We have a growing number of people who have now left the employment of the University for various reasons; many of them are local residents and wish to continue to be ambassadors for the University; others who move away wish to retain links through networks and news updates. These links are currently informally maintained with colleagues still employed and there is scope to create more sustainable forms of engagement.
4. Future priorities will include;
   * 1. increased investment in wellbeing activities for staff (and students); to develop the plan referred to above and provide staff with practical and accessible services. These will be developed with advice and guidance from in-house experts and the occupational health service provider.
     2. increasing the visibility of the Equality Framework, as a reaffirmation of the commitment to inclusive values
     3. processes for confirming academic workload allocation will be further developed
     4. encouraging staff and students to improve their environmental impact through appropriate education and training, and by rewarding and celebrating achievements; this will help to ensure achievement against objectives in the University’s environment and sustainability strategies
     5. a staff volunteering policy to be developed
     6. enhanced provision of staff development for those involved in learning, teaching and student support to encourage anticipatory adjustments for people who have experienced disadvantage
     7. seek to benchmark ‘well-being’ activities with external standards in order to identify where improvements are needed
     8. developing forms of engagement for people who leave, for example ‘staff alumni’/staff association