

SUSSEX 2025
STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

A BETTER
UNIVERSITY
FOR A BETTER
WORLD

US

UNIVERSITY
OF SUSSEX

SUSSEX 2025 REIMAGINES
THE PIONEERING SPIRIT
OF THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE
OF OUR UNIVERSITY BUT
DOES SO FOR NEW TIMES
AND A NEW GENERATION

DISRUPTIVE BY DESIGN

Designed to be different, the University of Sussex has a distinguished tradition of disruptive and experimental interventions.

We have challenged convention since the University's foundation in 1961. From the campus' modernist architecture on the edge of a rural national park, to our progressive academics and creative professional services staff, to the inspiring students who choose to learn and live here, to the very tone of the institution and the nature of its conversations, through to the expressions of radicalism, critical thinking and, at times, dissent.

This is Sussex. We dare to be different.

Today, our staff, students and alumni continue these traditions, making their own extraordinary contributions locally, regionally, nationally and globally.

Sussex 2025 reimagines the pioneering spirit of the original purpose of the University but does so for new times and a new generation.

KINDNESS
INTEGRITY
INCLUSION
COLLABORATION
COURAGE

What we stand for – our values.

Our five core values will shape what we say and do. We will support our staff, students and alumni to create a flourishing and strong Sussex culture that continues our traditions of disruptive creativity and innovation.

At all times, we will strive for excellence in everything we do. Our success and distinctiveness will be defined through our institutional values, and these will underpin our education, research and engagement activities.

KINDNESS
We will seek to be known as a 'kind' institution. We will care for each other and for the world around us, in responsible and sustainable ways. We will value collegiality and mutual support across all of our actions and activities.

INTEGRITY
We will ensure that everyone within our community is treated with dignity and respect.

INCLUSION
We will value and celebrate the diversity of our campus community and partners, and what they bring to our activities.

COLLABORATION
We will put collaboration at the heart of all that we do, seeking out productive and creative relationships. We will acknowledge and celebrate everyone's contribution.

COURAGE
We will speak out on issues that concern us and will face up to difficult challenges. We will support those who have the courage to change and be bold, innovative, creative and experimental.

Through the transformative power of education, research and engagement, we will work for a better world.

OUR FRAMEWORK FOR CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

The University of Sussex has a long tradition of experimentation and innovation that has made a real difference to the lives of many students, and those who benefit from our research and wider endeavours. We will build on these achievements and evolve as a better university, dedicated to making a better world.

Our framework will guide the institution to 2025 and beyond.

It is a seven-year transformation – an expression of what we stand for and how we will continue to build on our success whilst reinventing ourselves for the future.

In uncertain and changing times we will need to make tough choices if we are to turn our ambitions into reality. By working towards a shared vision, and having an understanding of our common goals, we will prioritise our efforts.

OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK IS BASED ON FOUR AREAS:

- Learn to transform
- Research with impact
- Engage for change
- Build on strengths

Based on the vision and aspirations outlined in this framework, our academic schools and professional services divisions will develop their own strategies and operational plans which will articulate how they will contribute to the University's goals and priorities.

MAKING
STUDENTS
PARTNERS
IN THE BIG
DECISIONS THAT
SHAPE OUR
UNIVERSITY'S
FUTURE

Our students will receive a transformative, high quality education and learning experience that will allow them to realise the futures that they want. They will be able to embrace opportunities and challenges, making meaningful contributions in their own way. Sussex students will develop the knowledge and skills to be critical thinkers, entrepreneurs, commentators, citizens and activists. »

DISTINCTIVE

We will pioneer, develop and integrate across our on-site and virtual programmes, cutting-edge and creative innovations in educational pedagogy, learning methods and digital technologies. Our curriculum will break boundaries, it will inspire students to be disruptive thinkers, and it will ignite our students' critical and entrepreneurial imagination to meet future global challenges.

STUDENT-CENTRED

We will embed meaningful student participation in everything that we do. Students will routinely participate as partners in the development of their learning, in the discovery of new knowledge, and in the big decisions that shape the University. Student input will help to shape the future of our physical estate and the spaces in which they learn, as well as the design of the curriculum and the appointment of academic staff. We will be recognised globally as an inclusive educational community, widening participation, where the diversity of our student and academic body is celebrated and the individual needs of our students are respected and supported through a personalised, holistic and inclusive approach.

DIGITALLY ADVANCED

We will be known as a university that is world leading in the development, application and use of smart technologies – whether that is the virtual and augmented reality of today or the new digital technologies of tomorrow. We will use these technologies to enhance student learning, facilitate knowledge creation, aid educational administration and strengthen University governance. Our students will be equipped with enviable levels of digital literacy and competencies in a wide variety of leading-edge technologies, ensuring they are able to challenge and succeed in the workplace of the future and in a rapidly evolving digital society. We will use targeted investment and strategic partnerships to achieve these aims.

ENHANCED CURRICULA

In partnership with our students, we will build creative opportunities that enhance their experience, and which extend their skills, confidence, competencies and networks so that they can imagine every possible future. We will increase the opportunities for students to take placements and paid internships in government, industry and with civil society organisations, as well as to participate as volunteers, mentors and community organisers. We will recognise the value of these diverse experiences through a new accreditation scheme that captures these and other contributions, giving students the opportunity to showcase and celebrate their attainments.

WORLD CITIZENS

Our students will be confident, knowledgeable and skilled, with clear career choices and real opportunities. They will be ready to be citizens of the world – connected, civically and politically engaged, entrepreneurial and creative.

WELLBEING

We will have a nationally recognised programme to promote positive student physical and mental health, and wellbeing. We will be known as a university that promotes good health and wellbeing throughout – and beyond – our students' education. We will have a fully accessible campus, with no areas 'out of bounds' to people with impairments or disabilities; we will have appropriate expert mental health services alongside good physical healthcare; our early warning and support systems will be sensitive, reliable and highly professional.

RESEARCH PRACTITIONERS

Our students will have the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and competencies through active engagement with the pressing research questions and challenges of our time. They will enhance their skills by working independently and collectively on topics of mutual interest and significance. They will become members of research groups, centres, networks and initiatives and work alongside academics and doctoral researchers, as well as drawing on wider partnerships beyond the University. These research-practitioner and team-working experiences will provide valuable skills to help our students succeed in the workplace and communities of the future, and as citizens in the world of tomorrow.



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We will reimagine ‘interdisciplinarity’ as a driving force for our research. This will be internationally regarded. Our research will create new agendas, contribute new knowledge and provide new ideas and solutions that will help to shape the world. We will challenge conventional thinking and discourses, offering inspiring and creative ways to understand and solve global issues. »

EXCELLENCE

We will support and develop our researchers to recognise and deliver excellence, at all times. Our mantra will be ‘quality not quantity’ and we will expect researchers to be able to produce world-leading work. We will value research that has an impact outside academic circles as well as within the academy, and we will develop the skills and competencies of researchers to maximise the influence and impact of their work.

EXPERIMENTAL

We will champion new ways to generate knowledge that challenge conventional wisdom. Extending the boundaries of research, we will draw on technological and intellectual advances to build a distinctively Sussex research platform and agenda.

OUR PEOPLE

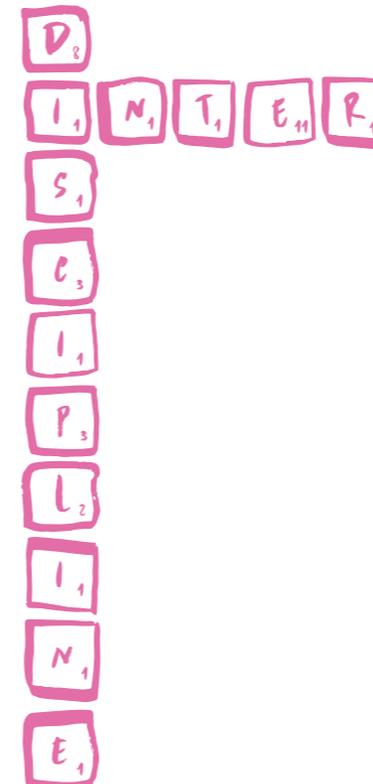
We will set up support mechanisms to help our researchers to develop throughout their whole career, as undergraduate researchers, postgraduate research students, postdoctoral researchers, early-career academics and established academic staff. We will support the whole research lifecycle, from fundamental to applied research, from first ideas to practical application, with appropriate co-production and iteration with our external partners. We will develop leadership and engagement programmes to support all of our research staff and future research leaders.

OUR STRENGTHS

We will be recognised for the individuals undertaking world-leading enquiry and the strength of our research in key areas. Sussex will grow these research areas and invest in emerging areas of excellence. We will continue to nurture and develop research excellence wherever it is found. Our research will transcend boundaries, be they disciplinary, geographical, political, sectoral or cultural. We will collaborate with academic organisations, and communities beyond the academy, confronting the grand challenges facing society and the economy – locally, regionally, nationally and globally.

INTERDISCIPLINARITY

Building on our pioneering heritage of interdisciplinarity, we will reclaim our reputation as the university of choice for academics and doctoral students committed to interdisciplinary research and engagement, and for students who want to understand their world beyond disciplinary boundaries. Interdisciplinarity provides creative opportunities to rethink old and emerging challenges in new ways.



We will re-energise our staff and students to the possibilities of this – to deliver both greater knowledge and action for change. We will do this by supporting the formation and development of interdisciplinary research programmes, groups and networks based on recognised and emerging areas of excellence and grand global challenges.

INTEGRITY

Research at all levels will meet the highest standards of rigour, integrity, ethics and governance. We will operate in an open environment and, wherever appropriate, enable access and share our research for public benefit.

GRANT CAPTURE

We will support our academics to attract and access the resources needed to undertake ground-breaking research. Our programmes will develop our researchers’ capabilities, networks and opportunities to maximise their success in grant capture – from small to large amounts – as well as supporting their ambitions to produce world-leading enquiry.

INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION

We will increase the number and quality of international research collaborations, partnerships and co-authorships, joining forces with researchers around the world to work on the global challenges that we all face. We will build a greater international profile and reputation as one of the leading research universities in the world. Our researchers will be highly regarded for the quality and distinctiveness of their work and for its wider impact.

**CONNECTED,
ENGAGED,
ENTREPRENEURIAL,
CREATIVE...
AND CITIZENS
OF THE WORLD**

We will be widely respected as an engaged university – interacting purposefully with people, organisations and communities at a local, regional, national and international level. We will do this so that we can bring benefits to society at large, the economy and to the many individuals that are part of our world. Our external engagement will enable greater public understanding of science, technology, medicine, health, society, the arts and humanities – challenging pre-conceptions and arming people with knowledge and ideas to inform their personal and collective choices. We will contribute to the democratic process, inspiring citizens to be active agents in their own communities. By doing this, we will learn and gain from our partners, just as much as they do from us. »

ETHOS

We will embed the ethos and practice of external engagement across all of our academic schools and activities. We will become connected to, trusted, and respected by more external partners at local, regional, national and international levels. Diverse individuals and groups will feel more connected with the University and will benefit, as we will too, from greater access, interaction and knowledge exchange. We will establish a development programme to provide academics and professional services staff with sector-leading training to develop their knowledge, skills and practices.

COMMUNITY

We will be seen as both listening and acting in the local and regional interest, working with public bodies, charities and civic society to find solutions to economic and social challenges. We will co-deliver projects on the ground in local communities – making a real difference to people’s daily lives and helping our partners to tackle big and small issues. We will be known as an anchor institution that convenes community dialogue and encourages social cohesion. We will develop our volunteering programme, with more students and staff making valuable contributions to local communities, initiatives and projects, and we will recognise and value these interactions as transformative for individuals and the community.

ALUMNI

With a network of alumni in more than 150 countries around the world, Sussex graduates are our best ambassadors and the embodiment of our values and knowledge. Building on their warmth, loyalty and commitment, we will create new engagement opportunities that drive and encourage increased involvement with their alma mater. We will establish an ambitious programme to include our alumni and supporters more extensively and effectively in our local, national and international engagements. We will draw on their experiences, expertise and networks, to broaden our engagement activities and to widen our influence and impact. Our alumni and supporters will join us in shaping the future of the University and will be at the heart of what makes Sussex a great and enduring institution.

CULTURAL

We will use the Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, The Keep and our many assets to forge broader and deeper partnerships with local communities, creative and cultural industries. The collections at The Keep, including our Special Collections and Mass Observation Archive offer an unrivalled record of regional and national history and social culture. These assets will be used to ignite innovative, world-class teaching and learning across the disciplines, harnessing creative methodologies and emergent technologies to build on our pedagogical approach. They will enhance our research, attracting grants and prestige partnerships. Through the Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, we will bring the world’s leading artists, thinkers and provocateurs to the University to show their work and embed them in campus life.



BUSINESS

We will embed business engagement, innovation and enterprise activities, addressing the relevant strands of the Government’s Industrial Strategy and its successors. These activities will support productivity improvement and will be supported by well-regarded business engagement staff, working across the University to accelerate and maximise our business and industrial activities. We will help and support academics to use these opportunities and collaborations for mutual benefit. The Sussex Innovation Centre will become a leading hub for innovation and technology. It will be a conduit for our enhanced commercialised, business engagement and knowledge exchange activities. We will expand our unique Catalyst programme, which links students with business and industry. This will complement their studies and University experiences, providing them with stronger career opportunities while growing the institution’s networks and reputation.

INTERNATIONAL

We will create an international leadership programme that will recognise and reward students who participate in mobility and inter-cultural awareness activities. To enable this, we will develop a model that will allow more students to engage in having an international experience, whether at home or overseas. This will be embedded in our curriculum, as well as extending to opportunities with overseas partners – bringing our students together with students from across the globe. Additionally, we will develop programmes to enhance the international mobility opportunities for our staff, ensuring there are exciting and sustainable ways for colleagues to connect with partners and institutions throughout their academic and professional work. We will create new, innovative, global hubs where research, teaching, blended learning and executive education can be delivered and that strengthen our international reach and reputation.

A PEOPLE- POWERED TRANSFORMATION FOR A KINDER UNIVERSITY

We will re-engineer our processes, structures and governance with a special focus on our core professional services of Human Resources, IT, Finance and Estates. Sussex will be known in the higher education sector for its agility, efficiency, effectiveness and care in enhancing and delivering our academic vision, strategies and priorities. We will have a confident and agile academic and administrative workforce, which understands its role in delivering the University's priorities and value-for-money outcomes. »

PEOPLE POWERED

Our staff and students will recognise the institution as one that values its people as its greatest asset. We will draw on our people to deliver great outcomes. Our staff will be supported to do their best teaching and research, and our students will be empowered as partners in their education. Exceptional teaching and research contributions will be rewarded equally. Our professional services staff will be supported in their endeavours and will be respected from within the institution and across the sector. Our alumni will be engaged actively in the life and work of the University, supporting students, being ambassadors for the University, and making their own distinctive contributions to engagement and the common good.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Strategic and competency-based frameworks will support the professional and personal development of all of our people. This will help them to define their career journey and manage their own aspirations in a way that best aligns their goals with those of their school or division. Using an inclusive people-centred approach, we will underpin our commitment to upholding equal respect across all our activities. Success will be recognised and rewarded through a model that ascribes equal value to work undertaken in support of all the University's education, research and engagement goals.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We will take bold action to reduce inequality and promote diversity and good relations. We will transform the University so that our campus community has a fully inclusive experience, providing the kind of environment where people can achieve their ambitions and potential. We will make this happen by being accessible, caring and flexible in everything we do.

DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

We will establish a powerful and robust digital infrastructure, supporting our students in their education and learning; academics with their teaching; researchers in their pursuit of new knowledge, engagement and impact; and our professional services in the delivery of our priorities. We will have a technological infrastructure in place that distinguishes us as a leading institution in digital transformation. We will partner with leading organisations to build a digital campus fit for the 21st century; pioneering the use of smart technologies and other leading-edge innovations; championing the use of automated, immersive and experiential techniques; using state-of-the-art energy provision to dramatically reduce our impact on the natural environment.

PRIDE IN PLACE

We will capitalise more assertively on our location and place as a village-campus on the edge of Sussex's stunning South Downs National Park, close to the sea and vibrancy of Brighton & Hove. Our pride in place, and our commitment to local engagement, will position the University as a unique space to learn, live, work, thrive and revive – a creative community built on enabling, empowering and caring values.

ESTATE

A high-quality estate will attract students and staff to Sussex. We will complete the next phase of our Estate Plan, having built more than 2,000 new bedrooms for our students, new teaching and research facilities and a student services centre. In addition, we will have increased the number and quality of learning spaces both on and off the campus. We will focus on core facilities to support the student experience, especially around the activities housed in our heritage and residential estate.

Sussex's new estate strategy will clearly articulate the ten-year rolling programme of capital developments, as well as the ambition and challenge around the estate, enabling appropriate and timely developments and renovations to deliver our academic priorities. Our focus on delivering cost-effective core services, to a high standard and in an environmentally sustainable way, will be well known.

REINVESTMENT

The University has a strong business model that seeks to balance improvements in existing programmes and infrastructure with investment in new activity and people. We will seek to increase resilience and capacity by diversifying income sources and increasing our delivery efficiency. In doing so, we will aim to enable more ambitious investment into our education offering, research facilities, infrastructure, people and estate. We will grow our surplus to ensure we can invest in the University's future and become more resilient to wider economic and sector changes.

LEADERSHIP

We will embed a model of 'The Sussex Leader', which exemplifies the values and behaviours that are expected of all those in leadership roles at Sussex.

This will foster and facilitate greater trust and devolution. Using this model, we will develop our leadership competencies at all levels, ensuring that staff understand their own style and can adapt them to deal with different situations in order to motivate and energise their teams. We will prepare staff for leadership roles early in their careers so they have the necessary depth and breadth of experience to take on roles with greater responsibility. Significant steps will be taken to achieve greater diversity among our leaders. Our leadership philosophy to embrace collaboration, trust and collegiality will be key to our future success.

CELEBRATION

As we develop our education, research and engagement activities, we will ensure that we celebrate and harness these successes – sharing these widely with our networks and stakeholders. Good news and success fuels positive energy and further achievement. We will build inspiring narratives that infuse and energise our communities and diverse groups, and instil values of trust, openness and transparency. Our engagements will be two-way – a conversation that matters.



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