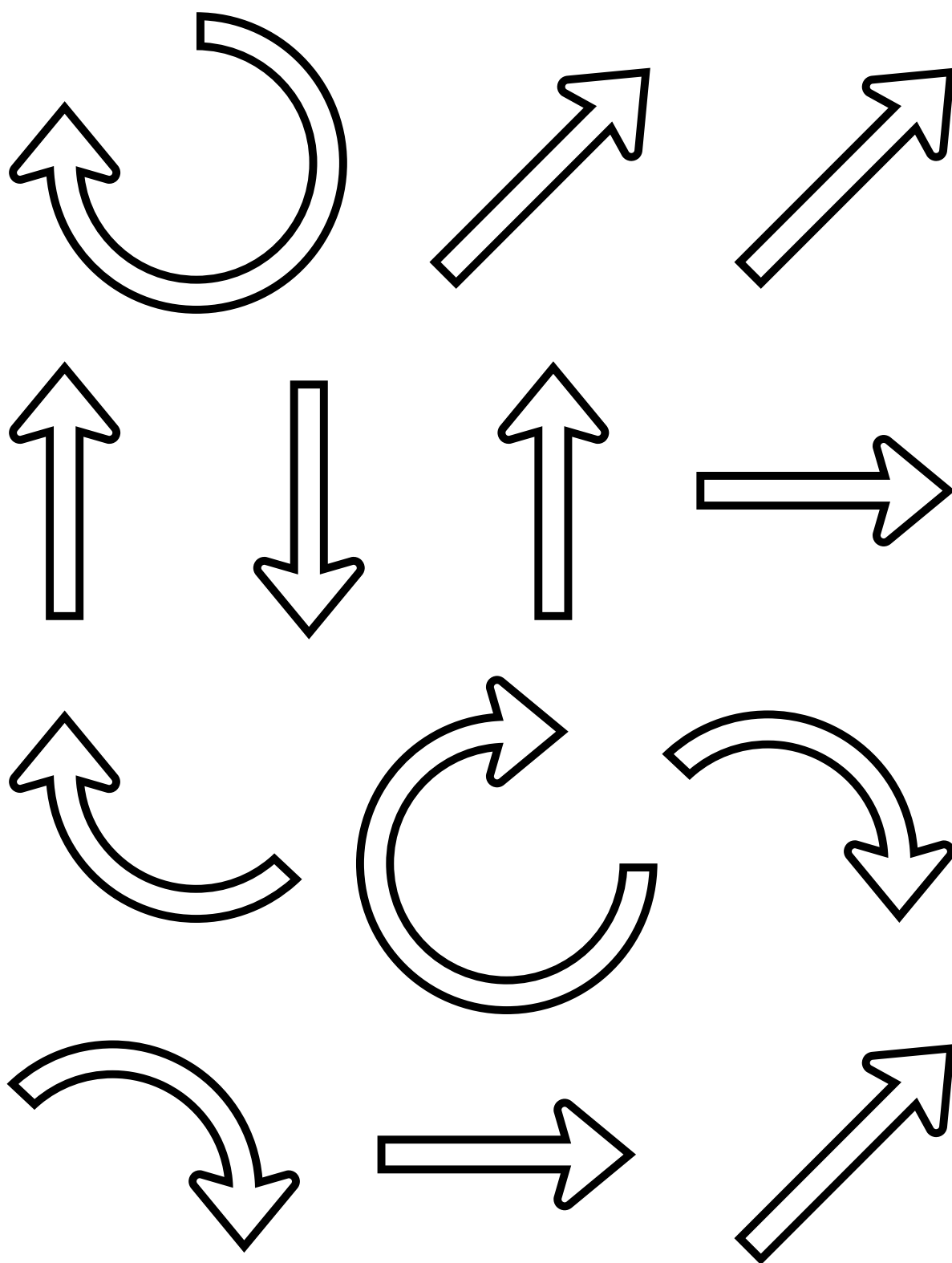# University of Exeter
Arts and Culture Strategy

Our Mission:
Activating Creativity

Our Vision

The Arts and Culture programme will place creativity at the heart of all we think, imagine and do together. By providing time and space for provocative and purposeful engagement across and between different disciplines, places and audiences, we will stimulate new approaches to research and enhance the student experience, whilst playing a leading role in the social, cultural and economic development of the South West region and beyond.

Introduction

This strategy will guide Arts and Culture activity until 2021, responding to the University of Exeter's ambitious Corporate Strategy (http://www.exeter.ac.uk/ourstrategy) alongside our distinctive locations, international standing and research strengths.

It builds upon the University's previous Arts and Culture Strategy by tying activity firmly to research and impact activity, across all colleges and campuses. It proposes a core programme, driven by purposeful encounters between researchers, cultural practitioners, and communities of interest. These encounters will support a more creative curriculum, be used to ignite ideas and engage and sustain work with the University's stakeholders. It sets out the methods, events and indicative projects that will generate this activity.

Institutional Rationale

Arts and Culture will act as an efficient multiplier across the University, catalysing efforts and impacts of our sovereign, Education, Research and Impact, and Global 100 strategies through the following benefits.

1. Building on critical mass for reputational gain

Exeter ranks among the top 100 universities for the study of arts and humanities in the world, and across both our campuses we already have a dynamic portfolio of arts and culture activities which are highly valued by staff, students and partners. However, activity is often fragmented, and there are reputational advantages to be gained through developing a coherent and consolidated offer. Arts and Culture will act as an informed conduit, attracting and connecting staff, students, external stakeholders and audiences.

2. Fostering distinctive new transdisciplinary cultures

As research and education activities increasingly cluster around thematic challenges rather than historic disciplinary homes, Arts and Culture will contribute innovative methods and models of working that hold space for transdisciplinary conversations and collaborations.

3. Economic value
The creative industries contributed an estimated £87.4bn to the UK economy in 2015 and 9% of total UK jobs were situated in the creative economy in 2016. The Creative Sector is the fastest growing part of the UK economy. Arts and Culture will assist in the co-production of new knowledge, and help to broker and nurture high-quality, resilient links with the creative economy with respect to research, impact and employability.

4. Intrinsic and social value
DCMS's 'The Culture White Paper' (2016) foregrounded and evidenced the intrinsic and social (as well as economic) values of culture. Arts and Culture will work with the University's various stakeholders, to support and inspire each other to contribute to quality of life, health, education and community.

5. Direct benefit to our own students and staff
The University Students' Guild has many societies with an explicit arts remit. But those with wider aims (such as wellbeing, entrepreneurship or environment) also offer significant opportunities for creative exchange and collaboration, as do FXU's societies, which are shared with an arts university. Brokering the exchange of skills and opportunities between the student body and leading cultural figures will support the skills of critical, creative and engaged graduates. Equally, multiplying the possibilities for cultural activities, through both work and leisure will support the University's People Strategy to attract, develop the performance of, and retain, the best staff and graduates.

Strategy Principles

Based on the Values of the Institution, activities will be developed in the following ways:

Collaboration
Cross-pollinate (between disciplines, between colleges, between campuses, between the University and its partners).

Challenge
Provide space and time to allow surprising creative connections and respond to emergent, cross-cutting themes and ways of working.

Community
Build and share opportunity, ensuring that activity is sustainable with carefully managed resources.

Rigour
Continually learn from activity to update these principles, striving to deliver our ambitious vision.

Ambition
Work with leading partners, using and improving the best models of practice.

Impact
Direct our activities towards positive change for our stakeholders.

Aim 1: Develop Purposeful Encounters

We will test and develop ways of collaborating that enrich teaching and learning, enhance research potential and connect partners through innovative, structured encounters between academics, students, cultural practitioners and organisations.

1.1 Excite Engaged Research and Impact

Drive the University's Arts and Culture offer, through seeding and sustaining varied and ambitious activity, giving real creative agency to academics and students, cultural partners and audiences through engaged and co-created research. With creative practice, interdisciplinary exchange and networks at their heart, sustained programmes of impactful exchange will bring the distinctive resources of the University and the region to bear upon future-facing challenges that have global relevance.

1.2 Support Creative Teaching and Learning

Support creative skills and learning across boundaries of campuses and disciplines, through curriculum development and new partnerships that support our mission to deliver a world-class learning experience. We will do this by developing opportunities for proactive student contributions and innovative learning through partnership working in support of the University's Graduate Attributes and student employability. We will reflect the aims of the Regional Skills Strategy, which highlights the enterprise activities that spring from cultural programming at the University and the importance of educational programmes that focus on creative approaches to real world problems.

Aim 2: Enrich our Cultural Environment

We will develop the conditions for a diverse, creative and internationally relevant artistic and cultural environment.

2.1 Nourish our Networks

Extend and refresh the University of Exeter's reach and relevance by engaging in mutually beneficial ways with expert professional networks, connecting international practice and experience with academics, creative networks, and student societies.

2.2 Diversify our Cultural Offer

Work with external and internal partners and key communities to support more diverse cultural activity and demonstrate the creative case for diversity within the University.

2.3 Support the University as Placemaker

Take a leading role in the region's cultural offer, with partnerships delivering distinctive and ambitious cultural activity beyond our campuses.

Aim 3: Unlock Resources and Potential

We will maximise the benefit and visibility of the University's Arts and Culture offer with flexible and creative use of existing and potential skills and facilities.

3.1   Create a Go-To Digital Presence
Develop and maintain a fit for purpose, public-facing web presence that shares key content and opportunities, and directs internal and external enquiries, while avoiding duplication and maximising knowledge exchange.

3.2   Increase Value through our Cultural Resources
Responding to the University's Business Engagement Strategy, the Government's Industrial Strategy and our growing networks of collaboration and support, we will maximise resources and opportunities through additional business income, collaborative research and philanthropy. We will explore opportunities across a range of sectors including heritage and cultural projects. We will offer alumni and Honorary Graduates the opportunity to engage with our programme both at a strategic level and through defined cultural activities, encouraging them to become donors and supporters of key projects. We will collaborate on new uses for our special collections, and explore how our activities and resources can be accessed in new ways beyond the boundaries of our campuses.

3.3   Improve the University's Professional Tools and Support
Develop tools and other internal best practice supporting collaboration, cultural presentations and events, based on identified gaps in internal knowledge, and from wider sector insights.

3.4   Evaluate and Share
Evaluate and disseminate learning from Arts and Culture activity and secure a significant profile for this activity that builds the reach and reputation of the University.