



# The Way Forward 2018-2023:

## Recast COVID-19





# Our vision

**Cardiff University exists to create and share knowledge and to educate for the benefit of all.**

Our vision is to be a world-leading, research-excellent, educationally outstanding university, driven by creativity and curiosity, which fulfils its social, cultural and economic obligations to Cardiff, Wales, the UK and the world.

By fulfilling our vision we expect to improve our standing as one of the top 100 universities in the world and the top 20 in the UK.



# Our values

We will operate according to the Nolan Principles of Public Life and furthermore be guided by the following values:

## Institutional autonomy

We are committed to accountable autonomy within and for the institution as a whole.

## Freedom of enquiry

We uphold the right to curiosity-driven investigation that may or may not have practical application. Through peer review in its broadest sense, the quality of research is expected to be of the highest standard.

## Collegiality, leadership and management

We encourage collegiality, which is essential to university life, and promote the leadership and management necessary for the effective and responsible use of university resources. We will strive to support the well-being of our staff and students.

## Equality, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to equal pay, treatment and opportunity, to supporting diversity and creating an open and inclusive community.

## Environmental sustainability

We promote sustainability education and enable students and staff to make positive changes to our environmental impact, in particular our aim to become carbon net zero by 2030.

## Financial resilience

We are committed to creating the necessary surplus both to invest for the future and for insurance against unexpected adverse events.

## Civic mission

We will fulfil our civic mission and broader social responsibilities and are committed to the Welsh language.



# Strategic themes

## Education and students

The tenets of the Way Forward (Education and Students) still hold, but we will re-prioritise activity to provide our students with the highest quality experience possible given the constraints of the Covid-19 crisis, whilst preserving our academic standards and integrity.

**Learning environment:** We will move forward on plans to enhance our online and blended offering to ensure we are agile enough to deliver programmes in 2020/21 and beyond. New online provision will be considered for potential new revenue streams, underpinned by a University-level learning technology service. This work will also include the relevant student well-being and employability support in a period of extended remote learning.

**Student experience:** The priorities for the University will remain enhancement of the student experience, retention and outcomes successes of our students. This work will include continued focus on:

- Analysis of students' feedback on their student experience (including a review of efficacy of module evaluation), and further embedding of the University Survey Management Framework and ensuing actions;
- Assessment and feedback, with the focus on online assessment and feedback, and continuing work to reduce the burden of assessment on staff and students;
- Closing the feedback loop, with priority on the construction of promotional online resources;
- A review of progress on Learner Analytics/First Year experience to support retention;
- Enhancement of our Welsh-language provision and culture in line with the aspirations of our new Welsh-Language Strategy, Yr Alwad/Embrace It, which is soon to be launched.

## Student success:

- **Placement and Employability:** Work to support careers and skills now operates remotely and can continue to do so. However, social distancing will make it more difficult for the University to achieve the expansion in activity necessary to meet this work placement goal. The Careers team is currently focused on looking at options for alternative delivery (e.g. use of projects/virtual placements, re-structuring to allow placements to start/finish later) and providing enhanced careers support to students to enable them to engage effectively with employers in the COVID-19 landscape.
- **Widening Participation:** The University will take forward the planning and consultation on its newly drafted Widening Participation Strategy. Work on this will continue (with a launch in Autumn 2020), supporting students from socio-economically deprived and educationally disrupted backgrounds to engage, achieve and succeed at Cardiff University.

**Teaching excellence:** Work on supporting academics and those who support learning and teaching will continue, with progress being made on the Academic CPD Framework and achievement of Advance HE accreditation, although timeframes for implementation may be changed. An online external seminar series is being scoped.

**Academic standards:** The priority here will be the maintenance of academic standards due to the significant variation which has been introduced as a result of COVID 19. There will be delays to plans to review academic regulations and periodic review into the 2020/21 session. The University will be required to take forward the outcomes of the recent Quality Enhancement Review (QER).

Although there have been delays to the construction of the Centre for Student Life, construction will continue to ensure a home for student support for 2021 academic session.

The programme to support Transforming Education Services will be adapted to fit the new circumstances, with a particular focus on library provision and digital education.

Some of the metrics which make up the subject league tables may be subject to review and potential delays in publication and in a similar vein, delays to the future plans for Teaching Excellence Framework have been announced.



## Civic mission

In the same way as Cardiff University reacted to major societal challenges of the 20th Century, the current social and health crisis caused by coronavirus requires the University to reshape our civic mission to help government, health services and wider society to revive and renew the Welsh economic, social and cultural landscape.

Our research strengths will be utilized to make greater civic mission contributions to new societal challenges faced by Wales, aligned to successful revival and renewal. Supporting job creation will be of paramount importance given the economic impact of the virus.

Innovation in education is likely to be more prominent than ever during the crisis and we will continue our contributions to this.

Our partnership with the NHS will achieve very much greater salience.

We will continue to work to enhance the Welsh-language culture of our campus in line with our new Welsh-Language Strategy.

Our relationships with external organisations will remain critical and potentially very helpful as we work our way through the pandemic.

## International

We will put in place mitigation plans and prepare continuously for a post-COVID-19 world where travel, free social interaction and physical international activity will be possible once more.

It will be critical to maintain and continue to build international relationships to position ourselves for the future. That said, this is an area that for the period of the crisis will be compromised and we will explore the extent to which we can learn from current changes in learning and teaching practices regarding international travel and reduce the level of international travel relating to conferences and fieldtrips.

Brexit will politically take a back seat but will attain prominence once more as we approach 1 January 2021. Whilst we remain committed to deepening the relationships with our European partners, activities are likely to be significantly impacted.

We will revise the KPI on international mobility to allow for 20% of home undergraduate students having completed 2 weeks of study, work, or volunteering abroad by 2023. We will explore

new opportunities for blended delivery, as well as opportunities for 'internationalisation at home'.

Whilst we will continue to recruit internationally and provide a supportive and inclusive environment for our international staff, we recognise that the current KPI on international staff may be challenging until circumstances return to something closer to pre-COVID.

We will continue to focus on maintaining and building strong relationships with international partner universities by remote methods.

The international summer school programme will be adapted to the changing circumstances, with modified means of delivery as necessary.

We will revisit the establishment of an international campus in the light of the changing environment and develop innovative methods for transnational education.

We will continue to support our staff to develop international collaborations that ensure success in a changing international research funding landscape.

## Research

We will mitigate the immediate impact of COVID-19 on research by encouraging staff to work on research outputs deliverable remotely.

Enhanced support for staff and postgraduate research students will be considered, depending upon the financial resilience of the University.

As access to labs and facilities becomes possible, we will implement a phased return to research, while ensuring a safe working environment for staff and research students. We expect to be able to pursue some of our current research grants, but other research is likely to be disrupted until the virus is well under control, especially where it involves human participants or international activities.

We will minimise potential financial impacts of COVID-19 on our research by working closely with funders, external partners and governments to ensure deliverable research outcomes, as well as consider matched-funding commitments to research.

We will reconsider our research strategy in light of the long-term challenges to the financial sustainability of research and the likely scale and direction of future research funding post-COVID-19.



We will review the £200m grants and contracts aspiration in order to determine whether this remains achievable.

We will continue with our review of University research entities, informing our post COVID-19 research strategy.

We will reconsider the REF research power KPI, informed by consideration of how the COVID-19 crisis is likely to affect the UK sector cost base.

## Innovation

We will complete our research-related building projects and the Cardiff Innovation Campus to position ourselves effectively in line with post COVID revival and renewal opportunities.

This will include reworking of business cases for our major Innovation projects to ensure that these are aligned to new funding opportunities and positioned strategically.

We will refocus the Innovation strategy to place the University in a strong position to contribute to the rescue, revival and renewal of research and innovation capacity in Wales and the UK post COVID-19.

We will work closely with local authorities, the Cardiff Capital Region, third sector and Welsh Government to develop major strategic initiatives able to deliver major economic benefit to the region. This will include developing new private and public sector collaborations for a post COVID world, in alignment with UK research and development priorities.

We will reconsider Innovation for All.

We will further develop our key strategic partnerships, with the aim of enhancing our teaching, research and civic mission contributions to Wales and the UK.



**Our ambition under these circumstances must be to survive and thrive over the next three years, as set out in this document.**



# Assessing our progress

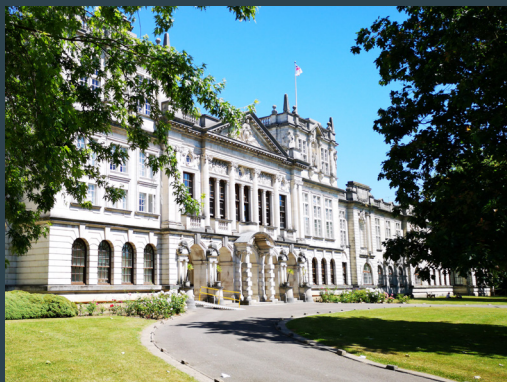
**At the strategic level we will monitor a small number of critical success factors rather than the top-level performance indicators by which we have previously judged our progress. While existing top-level KPIs will be monitored as part of the sub-strategies for the five themes, our attention must be strategically focused on the following:**

The health and wellbeing of our staff and students

**Corona focus:** all decision making will prioritise the health and wellbeing of staff and students, with the aim of keeping infection risk to an acceptable level. Frequent communication and engagement with students and staff will continue to inform all our activities, and we will consult as extensively as possible, including regular meetings with the campus unions.

Financial sustainability, especially fee revenue, cost base and the cash position

**Corona focus:** we will aim to return to a break even operating cashflow position and will only complete existing capital investment projects, prioritising contractual commitments. We will monitor our staff establishment in line with our income to ensure financial sustainability.



Student satisfaction and experience

**Corona focus:** as we make decisions in the face of rapidly changing and unpredictable circumstances, we will develop a rapid-response system for consulting students on proposed changes. We will work closely with the Students Union to give our students as rich an experience as possible under Covid-secure conditions. We will undertake regular surveys to monitor student experience, deal with queries and follow up suggestions on all aspects of student life.

Research grants and contracts

**Corona focus:** while achieving the existing £200m research grants and contracts aspiration remains desirable, we will focus on ensuring that researchers are supported in their endeavours and provided with the best possible environment for the duration of the crisis.

Civic mission and our contribution to rescue, revive and renew

**Corona focus:** we will deploy our academic, educational, clinical and research expertise to help governments and wider society position Wales and the UK to negotiate Covid in the least damaging way possible and build the best economic, social, environmental and cultural foundation for a post Covid world aligned to the fundamentals of the Wellbeing and Future Generations (Wales) Act.







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*The Way Forward* is available in Welsh or in large print format, contact:  
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