



University of Brighton

Corporate plan 2002-07



Introduction

The University of Brighton is a strong and distinctive institution. It makes major contributions both to the national system of university education and to its local and regional communities.



The University has deep historical roots in Brighton and Sussex. These go back to the middle of the nineteenth century in Brighton (with the School of Art dating from 1859) and the middle of the twentieth century in Eastbourne (when the Chelsea School returned south from war-time evacuation). In common with many 'new' universities, Brighton is the product of a succession of creative alliances of initially separate foundations. In addition to the School of Art, Chelsea and the teacher education colleges in Seaford and Eastbourne, these include the Municipal Training College (1909, which moved to Falmer in 1965), the Municipal Technical College (1897, which formed the basis of the College of Technology at Moulsecoomb in 1963), and the Institute of Nursing & Midwifery, which joined the University in 1994. The joint universities Brighton and Sussex Medical School will open in 2003.

Since university designation in 1992 the University has experienced a decade of steady progress, in the grain of this rich historical legacy. Student numbers have grown from 11,000 to 20,000, and the number of academic awards made each year from just under 3,000 to over 4,500. External assessments of the quality of teaching and of graduate employment have ranked among the strongest in the country, and the recent national assessment of research found more Brighton staff working at international standards of excellence than in any other 'new' university. The University has an enviable reputation for supporting students as individuals within a new 'mass' system. Meanwhile we have worked hard at improving the quality of our working environment, with nearly £100m of capital development, including new libraries on three of our four campuses. We have cemented productive partnerships with the public service and local authorities, with business and industry, and with academic institutions regionally and internationally.

This plan for the next five years reflects an appropriate balance of continuity and change. It reinforces commitments to professional formation and to civic engagement. It seeks to meet new challenges, especially of lifelong learning, of social inclusion, and of knowledge exchange in an information-rich age. It has been constructed following widespread consultation, inside and outside the University. It links with a number of detailed strategies, policies and plans, the achievement of which will be carefully and transparently monitored. It will lay the foundations for our twenty-first century contributions to higher education in the United Kingdom and beyond.

Professor Sir David Watson

Vice-Chancellor





mission

The University of Brighton's Mission

The University of Brighton seeks to:

- discover, test and apply knowledge effectively, creatively and responsibly;
- be an accessible, dynamic and responsive community of higher education, enhancing lives, communities, disciplines and professions; and
- secure the best possible outcomes for its students, staff and partners.

core aims

The University's core aims

The University will:

- 1** sustain an extensive, challenging and high quality academic portfolio by combining assured standards with flexibility of response;
- 2** nurture its intellectual capital ethically, imaginatively and sustainably, and make this widely available;
- 3** equip its students with the skills, knowledge and enthusiasm necessary to learn successfully and to secure employment;
- 4** collaborate actively with selected local, regional, national and international partners on the basis of mutual respect;
- 5** improve the environment in which members of its community study, work and live, and contribute positively to the wider environment; and
- 6** manage and govern itself with responsibility and sensitivity.

shared values

The University's shared values

In working to achieve its aims, the University will maintain the values that have informed its work since its foundation, while embracing and initiating change in response to fresh challenges and opportunities.

They are:

- freedom of thought and its appropriate expression;
- the creation and sharing of knowledge across a wide disciplinary base;
- the participation of members of the University community in its communal life and decision-making processes;
- the responsibilities and rights embodied in corporate independence;
- the participation of the University in the cultural, economic and social life of its region; and
- respect for diversity amongst members and prospective members of its community.



Aim 1

The University will continue to sustain an extensive, challenging and high quality academic portfolio by combining assured standards with flexibility of response.

Over recent years, the quality of learning and teaching at the University has been recognised as one of the strongest of any UK university, as represented in successive reports by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and Office for Standards in Higher Education (OFSTED). These confirm that it delivers high quality teaching in every subject area assessed under the recently completed round of assessments.

The University has consistently refreshed both the content of what it teaches and the methodology of how it teaches, often with private and public sector partners.

During 2002-07, the University will seek a steady expansion in student numbers. This will enable it to respond to the Government's widening participation agenda and to healthy demand for its courses. It expects much of the expansion to be developed with partner colleges, at sub-degree level, and to involve innovative modes of delivery. In response to the needs of those already in work and to the changing nature of work, it will also expand its postgraduate provision in selected areas. Growth will reflect academic impetus and professional innovation. Such areas are expected to include: subjects allied to medicine; art, design, digital and new media; and applied social sciences. The University will also ensure that its curriculum is increasingly internationally-informed.



Distinctive characteristics

The University's academic portfolio is distinguished by:

- the quality of learning and teaching, offering an individual experience of higher education in a 'mass' system;
- the breadth of subjects in which it is intellectually active;
- the range of awards available to learners, with progression routes for learners that respond to the initial and ongoing needs of individuals, organisations, and professions. This includes extensive provision delivered by partner colleges, in planned progression arrangements;
- successful piloting of new awards in response to need, including the Foundation Degree, Graduate Apprenticeship, EdD and new route PhD;
- certification of language skills for non-linguists and accreditation of work done outside the classroom (e.g. by volunteers and mentors); and
- relevance to its region.

Objectives

During the period 2002-07 the University intends to:

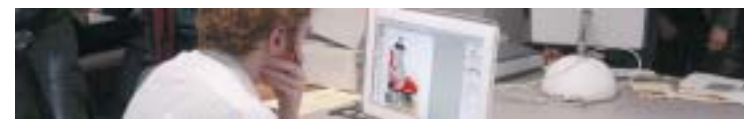
- implement its learning and teaching and staffing strategies;
- ensure that its portfolio remains intellectually robust and exciting, is informed by scholarship and research, responds to student and employer demand, and is increasingly international in outlook;
- ensure that there are adequate progression routes from partner colleges and from sub-degree to degree levels in each major subject area offered;
- play a full part in the further development of national quality assurance arrangements and accreditation frameworks for UK higher education;
- continue to develop the expertise of all staff who contribute to supporting learning;
- support the development of academic self-scrutiny amongst partner colleges;
- carry out the necessary reviews and benchmarking to be confident in the quality of provision and to demonstrate that externally;
- develop effective ways of transferring best practice across the University;
- review and improve the way in which student feedback is obtained and used; and
- working with partners, to open and develop the Brighton and Sussex Medical School, with first admissions for study in 2003.

Indicators of success

By 2007 the University will have:

- expanded its provision in order to meet the needs of some additional 1,500 undergraduates, 700 additional postgraduates and 150 international students;¹
- completed a further institutional audit resulting in the highest level of confidence in its quality assurance processes;
- completed 18 internal subject reviews;
- completed six institutional audits of partner colleges which furnish adequate levels of confidence; and
- sustained its involvement in quality assurance on behalf of the sector by maintaining engagement of staff from each major subject area as external examiners.

¹ University enrolments 2001-02: 12,170 home/EU undergraduates; 2,410 home/EU postgraduates; and 867 international students (annual operating statement, June 2002).



Aim 2

The University will continue to nurture its intellectual capital ethically, imaginatively and sustainably, and make this widely available.

The University believes that the nature of the higher education enterprise is inescapably research-related. The University's development has been profoundly influenced by the importance placed on research activity, broadly defined. The range and quality of the University's research has been recognised in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise. It submitted over 247 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff across 16 units of assessment and some 30% of those staff were judged to be doing work of international standards of excellence. This is a higher proportion than any other 'new' university.

During 2002-07, the University will consolidate the improvements in the quality and quantity of research, and improve the management of research and scholarship so that research relevant to each major disciplinary area meets international standards of excellence. It will also more fully exploit its intellectual property and bring this to bear in ways that support commercial exploitation. Services to business, based in large part on research capacity, will become fully part of mainstream University activity.



Distinctive characteristics

The University's management of its intellectual capital is distinguished by:

- the major investment in staff development for academic and administrative staff, learning technologies, new library and ICT resources, archive materials and staffing, and staff accreditation;
- the expectation that understanding and expertise in methods of learning and teaching are indispensable for all those involved with course development and delivery;
- the requirement that academic staff members keep up to date with scholarship in their subjects, for example through involvement with the relevant national subject centre; and the expectation that administrative staff keep up to date with relevant developments, for example through CPD and involvement with the relevant professional association;
- the commitment to an active and vibrant research culture in which research and teaching inform and revitalise each other;
- the commitment to sustaining a wide range of research activities, including those underpinning creative and professional practice and those achieved through collaboration and inter-and multi-disciplinary approaches;
- the management of significant national and regional archives, including on design and on film and video; and
- the commitment to innovation, as recognised in the Chairman's annual Innovation Awards.

Objectives

During the period 2002-07 the University intends to:

- implement its research, learning and teaching and staffing strategies;
- secure a significant and sustainable research base in each disciplinary area that meets international standards of excellence;
- play its part in national and international debates about research methods, priorities and disciplinary developments;
- increase research-related income;
- create a more effective administrative support for research work across central departments and a more effective framework for co-ordinating research development and support across the University;
- obtain maximum benefit from the systematic linking of teaching and research; and
- agree and implement a commercial strategy that secures the successful exploitation of and community gain from research, development, innovation and knowledge transfer, and that sustains the long-term impact of initiative funding after the initial funding period.

2 The 2001 RAE indicated that 31% of the University's total academic staff were conducting research at international or national standards of excellence. This is based on the numbers and proportions of staff in units of assessment rated 3b or above.

3 University enrolments 2001-02: 300 home/EU and international research students (annual operating statement, June 2002).

4 University research income is currently 10% of total income (University accounts, 2001-02).

Indicators of success

By 2007 the University will have:

- 40% of its academic staff conducting research at national or international standards of excellence;²
- increased the number of research students by some 100;³
- increased research-related income to 15% of total income (by 2010);⁴
- developed a more explicit research leadership role for the University's professoriate and appointed sufficient additional professors to deliver the research strategy;
- increased its income from third stream activities by 7% a year compound growth, in line with its commercial strategy;
- made further annual awards for Innovation; and
- secured the necessary investment in research space for science and for art and design.



Aim 3

The University will continue to equip its students with the skills, knowledge and enthusiasm necessary to learn successfully and to secure employment.

The University prides itself on offering an individual experience of higher education, and on its record in providing personal support to its students through to the successful completion of their studies. It will continue to offer its students an experience that is both intellectually demanding and personally supportive. These qualities have been recognised in external judgements of quality and in feedback from students. They contribute to overall undergraduate retention rates and graduate employment rates that meet or exceed the University's benchmark.

During 2002-07, the University will consolidate its reputation for student support and work to sustain and improve high levels of student retention. Increased care will be taken to support students' growing aspirations for autonomous learning and their need to combine work, family and study commitments by better aligning the support provided inside and outside the teaching environment. It will attend especially to the increasing diversity of its students, including the particular needs of students with disabilities, those from backgrounds with no tradition of higher education, and those seeking professional updating. It will continue to work with the Students' Union and others to provide opportunities for students that complement their academic experience.

Distinctive characteristics

The University's approach to student learning is characterised by:

- the penetration of work-related learning across the curriculum and orientation of the majority of courses towards the requirements of professional careers in the public and private sectors. Over half of the University's graduates earn professional recognition as well as their degree. Nearly 90% of full-time undergraduates have the opportunity to do assessed work-related learning as part of their course. The University's graduates are well-prepared for employment, with First Destinations data above its benchmark;
- engagement in debates about the development of academic subjects and their teaching, and the relationship between higher education and professional practice;
- structured engagement with professional bodies;
- the recognition of the increasing diversity of students' backgrounds, and the value that this adds to the University community;
- appropriate informed investment in learning technologies;
- commitment to high quality teaching and learning, exemplified in the Teaching Excellence Awards and Chairman's Award for Student Support; and
- high standards of delivery of student support, exemplified in the award of grade '4' for this aspect of provision in every QAA assessment since 1998.

Objectives

During the period 2002-07 the University intends to:

- implement its learning and teaching strategy, widening participation strategy and information strategy;
- recognise the importance of learning and teaching in the reward structure for staff;
- deliver a major work-related learning initiative including the second stage of the Career Planning Agreement (which provides for structured and integrated careers planning across all Schools and partner colleges);
- create a learning and teaching strategy implementation group and series of annual agreements between Schools and the Centre for Learning and Teaching, co-ordinated with course monitoring;
- launch a series of University-wide pedagogic research projects;
- enhance the role of the Centre for Learning and Teaching and Student Services Department to support students with disabilities, and students from backgrounds with no tradition of higher education, and those who work with them;
- further develop opportunities for students to take an active part in community activities;
- secure further improvements in the quality of its support services; and
- review and strengthen arrangements for supporting student retention.

Indicators of success

By 2007 the University will have:

- sustained its student retention and achievement rates at or above the relevant benchmark;⁵
- sustained its graduate employment rate at or above its benchmark and amongst the highest in the sector;⁶
- increased the number of part-time postgraduate opportunities by at least 400;⁷
- increased by 200 the number of opportunities for students to take part in structured volunteering and ensure that they can have that work recognised within their degrees;⁸
- made further annual awards to recognise excellence in teaching and in supporting students; and
- refined the definition of performance standards for student services.

5 University performance in the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Performance Indicators (PIs) published in 2002 is, on retention: 9% of young full-time first degree entrants are not in HE a year following the year of enrolment (benchmark 10%) and 13% of mature full-time first degree entrants are not in HE a year following the year of enrolment (benchmark 15%). On completion, 76% of full-time first-degree starters are projected to complete their qualification (benchmark 75%).

6 University performance in the HEFCE PIs published in 2002 is: graduate employment rate (excluding further study) is 93% (benchmark 93% and sector average 92%).

7 University postgraduate enrolments 2001-02: 1,513 (taught) and 201 (research) (home/EU and international) (annual operating statement, June 2002).

8 The University's volunteering initiative started September 2002, from a baseline of zero.



Aim

Aim 4

The University will continue to collaborate actively with selected local, regional, national and international partners on the basis of mutual respect.

The University has developed a reputation as a significant local and regional partner, and one that can bring national and international standards of work and insight to bear on local and regional issues. It recognises that there are increasingly circumstances in which single universities working alone cannot address complex and deep-seated problems. Effective collaboration is particularly important if participation in higher education is to be widened.

During 2002-07, the University will expand the part it plays in developments involving the intelligent combination of private, public and voluntary sector organisations and funding sources to contribute to economic development and social regeneration. It will concentrate more effort on services to business and the community.



Distinctive characteristics

The University's approach to collaboration is characterised by:

- the belief that partnership is intrinsic to the quality and range of work and the delivery of its Mission;
- effective partnership with the Students' Union;
- strong links with higher and further education institutions; local authorities; schools; health authorities and trusts; local and regional arts and sports bodies; local and regional economic and community development organisations; government departments including the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) and South East England Development Agency (SEEDA); and the European Commission;
- commitment to playing an integral part in the economic, social and cultural life of the South East region; and
- an active strategy of internationalism, including a number of international collaborations, with recognition that for some significant purposes, its region includes coastal North East France.

Objectives

During the period 2002-07 the University intends to:

- implement its widening participation strategy, international strategy and services to business strategy;
- develop with partners a coherent, well-planned and complementary approach to post-16 education in Sussex, including working with others to increase achievement in schools and colleges, and increasing the number of progression opportunities;
- work with partners to stimulate demand for higher education from young people in Sussex;
- develop further the partnerships and frameworks needed for the effective exploitation of research and development; and
- identify and implement ways of fostering enterprise initiatives amongst staff and students, for example by piloting the graduate enterprise loan scheme.

Indicators of success

By 2007 the University will have:

- moved closer to its benchmark for the proportion of young entrants from lower social classes and low participation neighbourhoods and sustained its position above the benchmark in respect of their previous education;⁹
- increased the amount of income generated through partnership with EU institutions;
- secured with partners a complete 'qualifications map' for post-16 learners from the locality, including expansion in the number of level 1 and 2 opportunities in partner colleges, and opportunities for progression to level 3 and beyond at the University;
- played its part in the opening of the Brighton and Sussex Medical School; and
- opened the University Centre Hastings.

⁹ University performance in the HEFCE PIs published in 2002 is: 24% of young full-time undergraduate entrants from social classes IIIm to V (national benchmark 29%; locationally-adjusted benchmark 26%) and 9% from low participation neighbourhoods (national benchmark 14%; locationally-adjusted benchmark 9%). 93% of young full-time undergraduate entrants from state schools/colleges (national benchmark 91%; locationally-adjusted benchmark 89%).



Aim

Aim 5

The University will further improve the environment in which members of its community study, work and live, and will contribute positively to the wider environment.

Marked progress has been made in developing information services, communication networks and the physical environment in support of the whole University community. It has invested over £100m in the estate since 1990.

During 2002-07 the University will further improve the quality of its working environment to benefit its community, whilst respecting and enhancing the wider environment in which it works.

Distinctive characteristics

The University's approach to its environment is characterised by:

- significant investment in the estate, including new libraries on three of the four campuses; the Helen Rollason Sports Hall and Sprinters Restaurant at Eastbourne; refurbished science and sports science laboratories; lecture, seminar and staff accommodation and a new refectory in Westlain House;
- project partnerships to achieve capital investment including the Health and Racquets Club at Falmer and student residences at Falmer, Moulsecoomb and the Phoenix Brewery;
- sustained attention to environmental issues in managing the estate, including park and ride schemes; purchasing policies; recycling; construction practice; two new public gardens at Moulsecoomb; and energy management leading to substantial reductions in consumption;
- sustained investment in ICT to support staff and students, for learning and teaching, research, and administration; and
- sustained attention to support service quality in facilities management, catering and estates management.

Objectives

During the period 2002-07 the University intends to:

- implement its estates strategy and information strategy;
- formulate and implement a long-term plan for securing significant increases in student accommodation;
- implement its response to the disability access audit across all sites;
- identify innovative ways of developing and improving facilities, including in partnership with public and private sector organisations;
- secure further investment in the estate to support research and related activity, particularly in science and art and design;
- complete the integration of its library and computing services;
- ensure greater network security and resilience;
- complete the learning-led implementation of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), and migration into the Managed Learning Environment (MLE), including staff development and student information skills development to support its effective use;
- review the impact of the VLE/MLE on the nature of accommodation required; and
- ensure that the physical infrastructure, equipment and communications networks supporting teaching, learning and research are up to date and fit for purpose, and, where necessary, facilitate innovation.

Indicators of success

By 2007 the University will have:

- completed phase 3 of the redevelopment of the Falmer campus, including purpose-built accommodation to support the University's role in the Brighton and Sussex Medical School, and made substantial progress towards completing phases 4 and 5;
- secured significant increases in the number of student residences provided on its behalf in Brighton and Eastbourne;¹⁰
- made substantial progress towards the redevelopment of library provision for the Grand Parade site;
- created and opened for business an innovation centre on the Moulsecoomb site;
- achieved hospitality assured accreditation for catering and conference services;
- sustained progress in securing lower environmental impact in managing its estate and facilities; and
- established student use of the VLE in 75% of undergraduate modules by (July 2005).

¹⁰ Currently 1,400 hall beds and 290 beds in the headlease scheme.



Aim 6

The University will continue to manage and govern itself with responsibility and sensitivity.

The University's chief assets in achieving its goals are the intellectual capital and professional skills of its staff. It is committed to their development and to putting in place the support structures necessary to secure their recruitment and retention, and to enable them to perform professionally. It has in place procedures to recognise teaching and research excellence, innovation and exemplary support for student learning. The University has developed a financial position that is relatively strong compared to the sector as a whole.

During 2002-07 the University will consolidate these achievements and underpin them with further attention to risk management, health and safety, and to the relationship between the Board of Governors and Academic Board.



Distinctive characteristics

The University's approach to management and governance is characterised by:

- an employment framework that respects the rights and well-being of individuals and that furthers the University's aims;
- a staffing strategy recognised by HEFCE as 'full' on first submission;
- an equal opportunities policy that values diversity and that seeks to use it to create a successful, dynamic and respectful institution;
- strenuous efforts to achieve a common organisational culture and communication across its four sites;
- major investment in ICT resources and the integration of library and computing services;
- ICT that supports learning and teaching, scholarship and research, including an active Learning Technologies Group and annual learning technologies conference;
- advanced administrative systems for personnel and payroll, financial planning and transactions and student records; and
- readiness to review and adjust its governance structure and practice.

Objectives

During the period 2002-07 the University intends to:

- implement its staffing strategy and financial strategy;
- address emerging concerns about recruitment and retention of academic and administrative staff, and about stress and security at work, including issues of work-life balance;
- agree a reward structure for staff that further harmonises terms and conditions and improves arrangements for the career progression of teaching staff;
- implement a staff development framework that supports priorities in research, teaching, administration and management;
- review its approach to management information and performance evaluation, so that it can support decisions of increasing complexity with relevant data;
- ensure that it can attract and retain governors and senior staff of sufficient calibre, based on a sensitive succession strategy;
- agree and implement a marketing strategy that enables its provision and decisions to be strongly market sensitive and that promotes the University energetically;
- review its approach to risk management so that this is a part of its key activities, and sustain its attention to matters of health and safety; and
- further develop alternative sources of income and reduce dependence on public funding.

Indicators of success

By 2007 the University will have:

- secured the objectives in the staffing strategy (2001-04) and agreed further development plans to ensure that the progress achieved can be sustained;
- maintained general reserves at least meeting the HEFCE-recommended level of 3% of turnover;¹¹
- maintained an investment fund of £10m;¹²
- maintained a Foundation Fund of £1m;¹³ and
- developed indicators of performance and effectiveness that better underpin planning and decision making.

11 Currently 3.8%.

12 Currently £10m (University accounts, 2001-02).

13 Currently £200k.



progress

Monitoring progress

Progress against the Corporate Plan will be monitored in two ways.

- 1 The Board of Governors will, over the course of a year, review progress against each of the six aims, with particular regard to the indicators of success.
- 2 The committees of the Board and of the Academic Board will review progress under a number of the thematic strategies underpinning the Corporate Plan. These committees are listed below.

Thematic strategy	Responsible committee of the Board of Governors	Responsible committee of the Academic Board
Commercial	Finance and Employment	
Estates	Property	Estates
Financial	Finance and Employment	
Information		Information Strategy
Learning and teaching		Learning and Teaching Implementation Group
Research		Research Strategy
Staffing	Finance and Employment	
Widening participation	Board of Governors	

- 3 Information on progress will be reported in the University's Annual Report and Annual Operating Statement.



University of Brighton



Further information is available from the University's web site
on www.brighton.ac.uk or from the Strategic Planning Unit (01273 642 615).

University of Brighton, January 2003



University of Brighton

University of Brighton
Mithras House
Lewes Road
Brighton BN2 4AT

Telephone 01273 600900
www.brighton.ac.uk