



GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024 - 2030





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More than **30%** of our students are
INTERNATIONAL

INTRODUCTION

The University's first Vice-Chancellor, Lord Robbins, pledged to build a university with a 'supra-national' outlook at its core, producing learning and scholarship that was unfettered by boundaries and borders but instead grappled with problems that were global in their scope and impact.

The 2024-2030 Global Engagement Strategy builds on Robbins' legacy and provides a global focus to the University's vision for its people, place and purpose.

Global connectivity has arguably never been more important to the mission of the University. Accessing the best students, minds and facilities are vital if we are to make an impact on people's lives and be a force for good in the world. They are critical to our prospering as a community of learning and our ability to sustain the kind of environment required to deliver inter-disciplinary, mission-oriented research, tackling the pressing issues facing the human and natural world and exposing and interrogating prejudices and injustices wherever they are found.

Realising these ambitions will require us to thrive in a volatile and increasingly challenging external environment and to respond swiftly to emerging threats and constraints. The climate emergency, prospect of a renewed global health crisis and shifts in geo-political relations have tested traditional business practices and undermined the legitimacy and efficacy of 'global' higher education, amidst concerns over immigration, identity, 'trusted' research, and the environmental impact of cross-border student flows.

The value of higher education has increasingly been called into question and behaviours encouraged that exacerbate global inequalities and run counter to academic standards and values.

In addressing these opportunities and challenges, the Strategy starts by recognising that the University's global interests are complex, multifaceted and in some areas work in tension with each other.

It seeks to embody our institutional values, investing in activities that make a tangible difference to individuals, communities and the natural world, in our region and beyond, while maximising the collective benefits we accrue from engaging with international students and partners.

It commits to forging a single learning community in which staff and students of all backgrounds are welcomed and entwined into the life of the institution.

It looks to protect the University's financial sustainability by building efficient, diversified, and resilient revenue streams and leveraging the new opportunities made available through digital technology and international partnerships.

Amplifying the reach and impact of our learning, teaching, research and knowledge exchange, the Strategy aims to enhance our global reputation, intensifying collaboration with like-minded partners and strengthening the connections that bind Stirling and Scotland to the wider world.

TOP 100

institutions in the world for
ten of the 17 United Nations
Sustainable Development
Goals (SDGs)

THE 2024 Impact Rankings

TOP 20

in the world for Zero Hunger,
Reduced Inequalities and
Sustainable Cities and
Communities

THE 2024 Impact Rankings

STRATEGIC PILLARS AND CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

The Strategy is anchored in the University's commitment to conducting its affairs with Ambition, Integrity and Respect, ensuring that all aspects of global engagement are carried out in a responsible manner and in accordance with our academic values and ethical framework, while remaining sensitive to and respectful of local contexts.



Students on the University's unique BA (Hons) Translating and Interpreting Studies jointly developed with Hebei Normal University.

The Strategy is built on three **pillars**:

- **Enhancing** our international **reputation**
- Developing a single **global learning community** on our digital and physical estate
- Building **financial sustainability** in our overseas income and recruitment streams

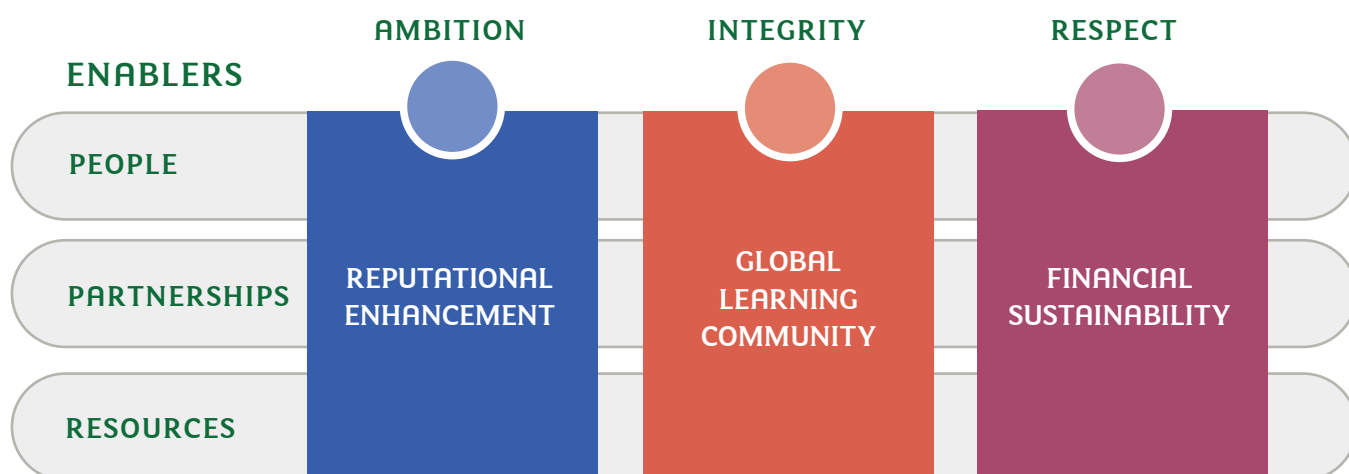
The delivery of these objectives is underpinned by cross-cutting enablers:

- **People** – in line with the University’s ‘People Strategy’, ensuring that we attract, retain and grow talented academic and professional service staff, developing their skills and confidence to enable them to flourish in a diverse, multi-cultural environment and deliver on the ambitions of the Global Engagement Strategy
- **Partnerships** – recognising that successful global engagement requires us to partner with organisations locally (INTO, Students’ Union, local authorities, internship providers, etc), nationally (UK and Scottish government, UUK-International,

businesses, etc) and internationally (recruitment agents, transnational education partners, research collaborators, British Council, relevant foreign state entities, charities, EU, UN and other global multi-lateral agencies, etc). Learning from and with our global partners improves our business operations and enhances our ability to ‘be the difference’

- **Resources** – ensuring that structures, systems, processes and resources are configured to enable the University to compete and collaborate in a dynamic international environment, maximise the advantage we derive from our digital and physical assets and ensure that the risks and rewards associated with international activities are properly monitored, understood and addressed by key stakeholders

UNIVERSITY VALUES



REPUTATIONAL ENHANCEMENT

The University's location and subject portfolio, the quality, impact and interdisciplinary nature of its research and teaching, its sense of place, community, mission, and purpose, all give it a 'story' that is distinctive and compelling.



More than **110,000 ALUMNI**
across **180 COUNTRIES**

Our identity is rooted in Stirling and our local and national context, but our experience and expertise are relevant and appealing to a global audience. The array of reputational enhancement activities embodies our ambition to be a values-led institution, dedicated to ‘being the difference’ and bringing about tangible improvements in places, spaces and lives across the globe. Acknowledging the constraints imposed by our current size, disciplinary mix and location, the enhancement activities aim to strengthen our reputation for excellence in what we do, how we do it and who we do it with.

The objectives of the ‘Reputational Enhancement’ pillar are to:

- **Sharpen our external visibility and profile** by raising awareness of our distinctive assets, such as our campus and sports facilities, our brand, transnational partnerships, research and teaching portfolio. Through targeted marketing activities, grow and intensify connections with our global network, alumni communities, partners and other stakeholders and maximise opportunities for graduate employability and fundraising
- **Embrace a values-led approach to global engagement;** striving to limit the environmental impact of overseas activities, while highlighting the contribution we make in tackling global problems; building fair, equitable and reciprocal partnerships based on trust and mutual benefit, and supporting capacity strengthening, knowledge transfer and co-creation activities with selected communities and institutions around the world. By targeting resources,

we will also increase the number of international research students and visiting researchers and support activities undertaken as part of the University’s ‘sanctuary’ agenda

- Establish **strategic partnerships** with a select number of universities, businesses and third-sector organisations and leverage membership of key international networks and our infrastructural assets and research and knowledge-exchange platforms to amplify the output, visibility and impact of our research priority areas
- Enhance our reputation as an employer by **embedding the university community more deeply into international networks**, extending the range of opportunities open to academic and professional service staff to engage with and benefit from our networks and partnerships
- **Make international collaboration routine;** using the Global Engagement Research Fund, streamlined processes and incentive structures to increase collaboration with trusted partners and improve grant capture from overseas funding sources; leveraging digital technology to connect our staff and student cohorts with their peers in partner institutions
- Ensure our **internal governance structures** identify, assess, monitor and report on risks associated with international activities and apply mitigations to protect the institution, its staff, students and partners

What success will look like

By 2030 we will have heightened the visibility of our excellence and distinctive identity, grown the network of active global alumni chapters and intensified our international connections for the benefit of our partnership, research, knowledge exchange, teaching, recruitment and advancement activities. We will be known for our globally-connected research and teaching activities and have integrated international partners into our mission-orientated research and REF2029 submission.

Headline monitoring criteria and targets:

- Improved Academic Reputation (as evidenced through relevant external survey results)
- Increased levels of international engagement and co-authoring (as evidenced through the number of projects with international collaborators and percentage of international co-authored publications recorded in Worktribe and SciVal)
- A doubling of the value of research awards derived from overseas sources

GLOBAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

International students and staff are central to the University's mission as a higher education institution. Their diverse backgrounds and experiences enrich our teaching and learning activities, improve the quality of our internal conversations and enliven the cultural and social environment, on and off campus.



University of Stirling students celebrating Graduation at our partner institution, Singapore Institute of Management.

Recognising the environmental impact of bringing international students to our campuses, this pillar maximises the collective benefit derived from their presence. It creates a 'global learning community' that develops global competences, a global outlook and sense of global responsibility amongst all those who pass through our institution, whether on campus, online or through our partnership programmes. It embodies our institutional values and fosters an environment that fuses the local and global, celebrates and capitalises on the talents and perspectives represented in our staff and

student body and continually interrogates what a 'global education' means for our institution and for our time.

The objectives are grouped under three 'internationalisation-at-home' headings:

- Values, culture and environment
- Curricula and pedagogy
- Support

Values, culture and environment

- Ensure the University develops, maintains and adequately resources support for a **welcoming and inclusive culture** (especially with respect to issues of race, faith, nationality and ethnicity), which celebrates and promotes our cultural and linguistic diversity and reflects staff and students' evolving identities and experiences
- Help international staff and students to forge a **long-term connection** with the institution and develop a sense of belonging through their lived-experiences on our digital and physical campuses and in the wider communities in which we are located
- Ensure that, as far as possible, student **cohorts are diverse** and the University retains its attractiveness as a place of employment for international academic and professional service staff

Curricula and pedagogy

- Provide staff with the necessary skills, support mechanisms and processes to engage with diverse, **multinational student cohorts** and embed environmental sustainability, inter-cultural and inclusive approaches into our curricula, materials, pedagogies and research activities
- Ensure our **curricula** address the academic and career aspirations of international students, draws value from their diverse backgrounds and perspectives and reflects the core values of our institution, whether delivered as full degrees, short courses or dedicated enrichment programmes
- In partnership with external parties, ensure that work-based learning opportunities and relevant, transferable, **employability** skills are embedded into our curricula and co-curricula activities

**2000 STUDENTS
TAUGHT THROUGH
INTERNATIONAL
PARTNERSHIPS
IN 2023/24**

Support

- Develop International Office capacity to provide relevant, timely and **targeted assistance** for international staff and students, providing a ‘one-stop-shop’ to cater for their needs, overseeing the delivery of the ‘internationalisation-at-home’ agenda and supporting international initiatives and institutional engagement with overseas partners
- Work with our students to develop the requisite academic, linguistic, professional, and interpersonal **skills** required to thrive in our learning environments and prepare them for their chosen careers; sustaining their connection with the university through the provision of life-long learning and networking opportunities
- Expand and diversify the range of **global engagement opportunities** available to academics, professional staff and students at all levels; maximising the value we extract from external mobility schemes (such as the Turing Scheme, the Scottish Education and Exchange Programme and YERUN researcher mobility awards) while balancing physical mobility with an expansive offering of Collaborative Online International Learning opportunities across our degree programmes

What success will look like

By 2030 ‘internationalisation-at-home’ will be an intrinsic part of the institution’s fabric and have a tangible impact on all staff and students. Campus and digital learning environments will reflect our global values and connections. Students and staff of all backgrounds will feel part of a single learning community, and will be educated, developed, equipped and inspired to thrive in the global job market and play their part in creating a more just, equitable and empathetic global community.

All undergraduate students will have benefited from global engagement opportunities, whether delivered through physical or virtual mobility, field visits or collaborative ‘global classrooms’.

Headline monitoring criteria and targets:

- Improve aggregate scores and sector quartile positions for ‘overall’ and ‘community’ responses in PTES, and NSS results for international students to be at least equal to those recorded for UK and home students
- Extend the range of opportunities available to students for global engagement, virtual exchange and physical mobility, tracking their uptake and impact



**91% OF
INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS**

were satisfied with their
experience at Stirling

ISB 2022

**55% OF RESEARCH
OUTPUT
INTERNATIONALLY
CO-AUTHORED**



140+ NATIONALITIES

represented on campus

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The revenue received from overseas sources is critical to the University's financial health and the realisation of its ambitions. The fundamental conditions facing Scottish institutions are unlikely to change the sector's reliance on overseas sources, where competition is expected to remain extremely tough across all areas of activity.



Staff and students performing
Tai Chi at Chengdu University
Stirling College.

On-shore recruitment will be influenced by factors beyond our control, such as UK government policies and rhetoric, the actions of competitor anglophone HE sectors, the state of geo-political relations and economic conditions in key markets. Growth trajectory in our overseas research awards, stalled by Brexit, will likewise remain dependent on the UK's association within Horizon Europe and its successor programmes. Fortunately, we build on strong foundations and a legacy of success.

Our student community has never been so diverse, with students enrolling on our programmes in unprecedented numbers from all quarters of the world. They have enlivened and enriched our social and learning environments, contributed to our residential, commercial and sport operations, and generated huge social, cultural and economic benefits for Stirling and the wider community.

Over the period of the next Strategic Plan, we will consolidate and build on our current position, and improve the sustainability and surplus-generating capacity of our overseas income flows.

In order to achieve this, the University will seek to:

- Mitigate **the effect of potential market volatility** by maintaining, where appropriate, two intakes a year, targeting growth in non-restricted undergraduate recruitment, and working to agreed targets balancing on-shore and partnership recruitment in each of our priority markets
- Manage the financial risk created by exogenous shocks by maintaining **geographical diversity** in our on-shore recruitment, adopting policies that balance intakes from key source markets whilst

growing recruitment from less represented regions; expanding the portion of foreign government-sponsored students, progressing students recruited through the INTO-Stirling JV and other partnership arrangements, including self-funded inbound study-abroad partnerships, and building capacity in transnational education partners to tap into intra-regional student flows

- Maintain and develop innovative, relevant **degree and short course portfolios**, tailored to international market demand, and seek to widen the internal distribution of international students across degree courses
- **Diversify income streams** by doubling the surplus derived from institutional partnerships: building on existing relationships and leveraging technology and digital resources to support the development of new courses/partnerships in markets that can support high-volume and offer a strong return on investment
- Double the income generated by **co-curricula activities** by enhancing the attractiveness, scale and diversity of our summer school and co-curricula offerings
- Develop an international element to our **alumni and advancement activities**, aligning resources and networks in target markets accordingly
- Further enhance our **systems, processes, reporting and monitoring tools** to enable the University to adopt agile, data-driven responses to actual or latent developments in the external environment

What success will look like

By 2030 the University will have deepened and diversified its international revenue streams. On-shore recruitment to campus degree programmes will remain the primary activity, and our exposure will be mitigated through an expanded portfolio of transnational partnerships, dual degrees, articulation pathways, co-curricula and online provision. International sources will have made a significant contribution to improving our research performance and grant capture and achieving a projected income of £250 million and a student number target of 'at least 20,000 across all modes of study'.

Headline monitoring criteria and targets:

- Track income and surplus generation from all international sources as a contribution to achieving the objectives set out in the University Strategic Plan
- Maintain a balanced portfolio of recruitment/income generating activities across different regions, while protecting our position in core markets

**SCOTLAND'S
UNIVERSITY FOR
SPORTING
EXCELLENCE**

UNIVERSITY of
STIRLING



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**BE THE
DIFFERENCE**