



University of
Nottingham

UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

University of Nottingham Strategy

A Consultation Green Paper

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Foreword by the Vice-Chancellor

There is no question that we are living in changing and challenging times. Our new University strategy needs to recognise the social, political, cultural and economic contexts in which we are operating, while being true to our core mission and values. Global Strategy 2020 has served the University of Nottingham well by ensuring that we have a broad international outlook, are able to take bold decisions and are financially sustainable.

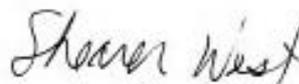
However, looking ahead to the next decade and beyond, we will face an increasingly competitive global higher education sector, greater expectation from all stakeholders, intensifying regulation and more constrained financial circumstances. In order to thrive in this complex landscape, it is crucial that our strategy stays true to our heritage and history while adapting to the needs of the present day.

From the time of Jesse Boot, the University of Nottingham has been known for discovery and innovation in research, for an outstanding academic and social experience for our students, and for a willingness to take risks and try new ventures.

We should retain these significant elements of our DNA - the ambition, zeal for discovery, commitment to quality and global outlook that has characterised the last decade. We should also consider how we can ensure that our educational offering, our research and knowledge exchange and our relationships with partners worldwide, our local community and the public are fully aligned with the needs of the society in which we live.

Most importantly, our new strategy should articulate decisively a core set of principles and values that we collectively wish to promote. This Green Paper provides a pivotal opportunity for our University community to advise on what those values should be, as well as to comment in full on our aspirations and direction of travel in all aspects of our core activity.

I hope everyone will take some time to consider this consultation document and submit views and comments through the consultation questionnaire. These views will prove critical in shaping our new University Strategy to navigate the challenges ahead, retain our unique identity as an institution and write the next successful chapter in the University of Nottingham's history.



Professor Shearer West
President and
Vice-Chancellor

Introduction by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Our current University Strategy – Global Strategy 2020 (GS2020) – is coming to an end. We have achieved a great deal since GS2020 was developed and we are well placed to embrace the challenges of the future.

For our new University Strategy we are planning to take a rather different approach to suit the rapidly changing context. Instead of a long document which tries to set out our ambitions across all the different aspects of our work, we want to work with students, staff and other members of our community to develop a short high level (maybe just one page) and durable statement of our vision and values, which will be supported by specific plans for different areas which can be updated as needed.

This consultation document – the Green Paper – is a key step in developing our strategy for the future. It is designed to provoke discussion and capture views on the most significant choices we need to make. I hope that as many as possible of our students, staff and wider community will contribute their views to the debate.

Many of you participated in events in November 2018 to discuss the 21st Century University and your ideas have been invaluable in shaping this document. You've told us that it is frustrating when views which have been expressed through consultation do not seem to be acknowledged or considered. A full report on the November events is available on the **strategy website** and the ideas generated are referred to throughout this document. In a few cases we have highlighted where something suggested has been ruled out, and why.

How can you get involved?

Throughout March and April there will be opportunities to discuss the issues raised in this document and contribute your answers to the questions. As well as University Committees and some Town Hall meetings in the UK, China and Malaysia, we would like to encourage as much discussion as possible in team meetings, committees and learning community forums.

This document is broken down into different sections, each with a limited number of questions which we are asking you to consider. Please let us have your responses using the answer form on the **strategy website**. You are welcome to respond to all the questions, or just those in the sections which most interest you. If you only have time to answer two questions, we are asking you to suggest

- One small change for the future
- One radical idea for the future

I look forward to discussing the content of this Green Paper with as many of you as possible and to hearing your views through our consultation events and website.



Professor Andy Long
Provost and Deputy
Vice-Chancellor

Mission

Summary

- We are in a position of strength, but there is room for progress
- The challenging external environment means we need to consider our direction
- We are open to exploring radical possibilities as well as incremental change
- Many stakeholders are not clear what is distinctive about the University
- We want your views on the University's purpose, growth and areas of focus

Our position

Our strategy will build on a successful and distinctive heritage of excellence in research and education, and a proud record of making a difference to society locally, nationally and internationally.

Since 2017 we have summarised our vision as follows:

“To deliver the very best teaching to our students and to transform lives around the globe through our world-leading research.”

And our mission as:

“We are a pioneering university. A place that inspires world-leading teaching, research and scholarship. A place that transforms lives and shapes the future.”

We enter the next phase of the University's development from a position of strength but at a time which requires us to consider our purpose and direction with an eye to radical possibilities as well as incremental change.

By most external measures we are in the top tier of similar institutions but with room for progress. Our reputation tracking across key stakeholder groups indicates a generally positive view of the University in terms of quality and an awareness of our global presence. However, many stakeholders are not clear what is distinctive about the University of Nottingham.

Internally we are an organisation not entirely at ease with itself and with evident challenges to overcome in relation to staff engagement, equality, diversity and inclusion.

In the lifetime of the GS2020 we have grown in the size of our global student population. More specifically we have seen significant growth in China, some growth in the UK and in Malaysia the student population has stayed broadly the same. We have also seen some significant shifts in the balance between students at different levels and from different groups.

We have not succeeded in attracting a greater proportion of students with higher prior attainment or in significantly diversifying our UK student population by attracting a higher proportion of students from under-represented groups. Although the international diversity of our student body is a great strength of the University, we have not recruited as many international students as we intended, particularly at undergraduate level.

The external context

Many people in Higher Education have referred to the current period as unprecedented. The consequences of Brexit, both immediate and longer term, remain uncertain but are bound to be significant economically and politically.

In the UK, Government involvement and expectations have resulted in a markedly more hands-on regulatory framework. The outcome of the current fees and funding review is not known at the time of writing, but all the signs are that it will reduce the level of publicly supported income flowing to the University in respect of UK undergraduate students.

In Malaysia, the involvement of Government agencies remains significant. Steps are being taken to reduce this administrative burden but it is not certain that significant changes will be realised. The last General Election (GE14) has added to uncertainty, but is also a cause for optimism.

Expectations from prospective students across all aspects of their education and student life sit alongside changing demographics across the world.

The challenge of accessing funding for research looks set to increase with opportunities increasingly focussed on identified challenges.

Our choices

Aspects of the University's mission which could present choices of emphasis include:

- maintaining a comprehensive discipline mix or adjusting the subjects we teach and the research we pursue to follow the changing preferences of students and the availability of research funding
- supporting researchers in exploring fundamental questions or responding to externally funded research challenges
- supporting our students to develop enabling knowledge and skills or equipping them with the specific skills employers seek
- working in partnership with our local communities or occupying a global role in advancing knowledge

In reality we are likely to want to continue to do all of these things to some extent. The more interesting question may be what should be special and distinctive about how the University of Nottingham seeks to pursue these purposes.

Views expressed so far

During the 21st Century University conversations staff were very engaged with potential opportunities for the University of Nottingham to make an impact on society through the education of our students, through our research and through our overall influence on the communities – local and global – which we serve.

However, views were divided on which aspects, if any, of the University's purpose should be emphasised and how the size and student population of the University should develop.

Is anything ruled in or out?

It has been suggested that a more distinctive and focused strategy for the University would express a choice between research or teaching and learning in our overall mission. The new strategy will continue to aspire to excellence in both spheres and in the way they integrate and reinforce each other.

It has also been suggested that the University should not co-operate with external regulatory exercises which aim to assess our performance, in particular the various “excellence frameworks”. While these exercises are imperfect and can be burdensome, they exist and it would be too damaging to the University financially and reputationally to withdraw from them. Participation in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is a condition of our registration with the Office for Students as a University. Without the Research Excellence Framework (REF) the University would not receive any quality-related (QR) research funding from government, which is the only research funding stream that allows for flexibility in how we allocate it.

In Malaysia too, withdrawing would exclude the University from certain opportunities such as applying for government research funding.

Consultation Questions:

- In a sentence, how would you describe the overall purpose of the University of Nottingham?
- Should the University plan to grow? If so, what sort of growth do you think we should aim for?

Please suggest:

- one small change for the future
- one radical idea for the future
- one thing about the University of Nottingham you want to make sure we retain in the years to come

People, culture and organisation

Summary

- The University has a strong reputation as an employer
- We are now developing our organisational culture
- Equality, diversity and inclusion is a major driver
- We are striving to improve staff and student engagement and collaboration
- We want your views on the values and behaviours we should aspire to, and how we ensure that our staff and student communities reflect our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) commitment

Our position

Few organisations are as varied in their activities as the University of Nottingham with students from more than 150 countries studying more than 1,000 different programmes; and staff drawn from across the globe working in the widest range of academic disciplines as well as in supporting roles requiring specialist skills from animal husbandry to elite sports coaching, from catering to cutting-edge learning technology development. This variety offers a richness of culture and organisational environment but also presents some significant challenges.

GS2020 expressed our core principles and values as follows:

- Think globally, deliver locally, and engage personally
- Sustain our commitment to being comprehensive, research intensive and socially responsible
- Put students at the heart of the University
- Value all staff and support them to excel
- Take an international outlook across all our activities
- Focus on excellence and quality
- Value diversity and promote equality
- Enrich our heritage and build on the legacy of Sir Jesse Boot, to honour our public benefit obligations to current and future generations of students, alumni and staff, and the communities in which we are embedded

These were distilled into four statements which were adopted in 2017:

- **Pioneering spirit** – we are curious, forward-thinking and visionary
- **Unlock potential** – in our world, potential is both unlocked and limitless
- **Globally connected** – in our global community connections have no boundaries
- **Transform lives** – we improve lives for the better and shape the future

The University has a strong reputation as an employer and most of our job vacancies attract a strong field of candidates. We invest extensively in staff development, including through our Leadership and Management Academy.

But we know that we need to work to develop our organisational culture. The 2017 staff engagement survey showed this clearly. Staff have expressed concern about workload, wellbeing and pensions. A lack of mutual understanding and sometimes even of mutual respect can characterise exchanges between different groups of students and staff.

The University has shown a strong commitment to EDI and is making positive progress in understanding and reducing inequalities between some groups of staff and students recognised for example through institutional and school Athena SWAN awards, and in our work towards the Race Equality Charter. But at every level from student recruitment and attainment, to the composition of different staff groups and our gender pay gap, there is evidence of how much more there is to do to ensure that the experiences and opportunities for our staff and students are equal for all.

In terms of governance, 2018/19 has seen a wholesale overhaul of our structures, aimed at ensuring wider engagement in decision-making and enhancing understanding and transparency of the University's committee operations as well as greater coherence and connection across professional services, both centrally and faculty - and school-based staff.

The external context

For all large universities there are tensions to be managed between the traditional concept of a university as a self-governing community of scholars on the one hand, and the requirements of a complex large organisation on the other. The modern context requires agility and decisiveness. Many of our responsibilities require specialist professional expertise and experience. The diversity of our academic disciplines also makes for challenge in balancing efficiency and consistent standards with the specific requirements and cultural expectations within particular disciplines.

The significance of staff engagement and the need to support staff and student wellbeing in all its aspects are likely to be of increasing importance to all responsible large organisations in the years to come, as the interrelationship between engagement, wellbeing and productivity are more fully recognised.

In the UK a tightening labour market means that we may experience greater challenge in attracting and retaining the very best staff. For the most successful universities like Nottingham, which rely heavily on the contribution of talented staff from the European Union and beyond, there is also a significant risk to our organisation if the UK as a whole is a less welcoming environment for international staff in the future.

Views expressed so far

Issues about how the University works and how different groups of staff work together were prominent in the 21st Century University discussions. A strong appetite for practical steps to improve collaboration and break down barriers between different groups of staff was particularly evident. Pride in the University and its achievements was evident alongside concerns about workloads, conditions and behaviours.

A dedicated consultation process on the University's new EDI Strategic Delivery Plan has taken place during February and March 2019. The University Strategy development team are working closely with the EDI team to make sure that views expressed are shared across the two consultations.

Is anything ruled in or out?

While it is recognised that we need to continue to improve some aspects of how major recent organisational changes are working in practice, the University's Executive Board (UEB) has ruled out reversing these changes, in particular in relation to the role of faculties and the creation of a central Student Services Department.

Consultation Questions:

- Which words best describe the values and behaviours we should aspire to as a University community?
- The composition of the University's staff population is very different from that of our student population and from that of the local community in relation to characteristics including gender, ethnicity and disability. Should we aim for our staff group to reflect the composition of the student body and/or local community?
- If so, what do you see as the most important step we could take to achieve this aim?

Student life

This section covers all aspects of the student experience except those which relate directly to teaching and learning (which is covered in a separate section). These include support for health and wellbeing; accommodation; careers and employability; sport and activities. We recognise that the student experience begins long before the student joins us and lasts long after they have left.

Summary

- Our students tell us that they are generally satisfied with their experience of student life
- We want to ensure all students are able to enjoy the same opportunities
- EDI is a major driver
- Students are increasingly seeking a personalised experience tailored to them
- We want your views on the focus of our facilities and services, and which should be given the highest priority

Our position

Across all of our campuses and programmes University of Nottingham students express high levels of satisfaction with their overall experience of student life. We engage with the student community in a range of ways to ensure that we continue to understand their concerns and priorities and develop our facilities and support accordingly.

Recent investments in facilities include the donor-supported Cripps Health Centre and David Ross Sports Village; The Tuanku Zara Teaching Centre, which includes drama spaces; the University of Nottingham Malaysia (UNM) Student Association Centre; the new University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC) library, new teaching buildings and auditoriums.

We recognise that there is more to be done to ensure that all students enjoy the same opportunities to perform to the best of their potential. Our EDI Strategic Delivery Plan is being developed in parallel with this overall strategy. Work is also underway to make further improvements to the support we offer students through their transition to university, particularly those who are studying far from home, as well as their move into the world of work.

Students and staff work together in a variety of ways to develop academic and wider opportunities, including work on co-created projects, via local student representatives on individual courses and in our academic schools, as well as through the formal structures including elected officers of the Students' Union/Association. All academic schools work closely with our Careers and Employability Service.

The University works in close partnership with our Students' Unions and Student Association to ensure additional support, activities and representation for our students.

The external context

In the UK a strong theme of the government's approach to, and media coverage of, universities is to present Higher Education through a consumerist model which encourages focus on a transactional relationship between Higher Education institutions and their students, rather than a more comprehensive campus experience. Feedback from our own on-campus students emphasises how important the support for their accommodation, food, leisure facilities and social environment is in enabling them to achieve their best.

During the recent expansion of the Higher Education sector in the UK, the extent of opportunities for wider personal development and support beyond the purely academic is a point of difference between some of the specialist and new entrant institutions and established comprehensive universities like Nottingham, with many of the former offering very limited opportunities.

The prevalence of mental health issues for students is of increasing significance and concern for universities. In England, the proportion of 16 to 24 year olds experiencing a common mental disorder rose from 15% to 19% between 1993 and 2014. The support universities can and should offer to students and their families in relation to mental health is amongst the most challenging student welfare issues at present across all of our campuses.

Our choices

How we develop the facilities, opportunities and support we offer to students beyond their academic studies is closely related to how the size and composition of the student body evolves.

Extending our offer of short term, continuing professional development programmes and online programmes may mean offering some students a different and tailored approach rather than a full campus experience.

Choices around our mission and identity, particularly our civic focus, imply strong support to our students in their volunteering and service activities.

Views expressed so far

In developing this Green Paper we have been able to draw on rich information from successive cohorts of students through our regular surveys of different groups of students as well as our dialogue with the Students' Unions in the UK and China, and the Students' Association in Malaysia. The strategy development team are looking forward to engaging directly with students as part of the consultation process.

Above all the message we have heard so far is that students' expectations and wishes for their University life are as diverse as our students themselves. Common themes across many groups of students are the emphasis on being treated as individuals and on a personal experience of the University which takes their needs and wishes as its starting point.

During the 21st Century University events, staff expressed enthusiasm for continuing to work with students to enhance the development opportunities and support they receive and, in particular for ensuring that our teaching and learning approach supports the development of the professional and personal skills employers look for; and that the support services on offer put all of our students in the best position to learn and develop.

Is anything ruled in or out?

Not at this stage.

Consultation Questions:

- Which student facilities should be the highest priority for any future improvement?
- Where would you focus resources for student support between support and facilities directly related to learning; and support and facilities to support the overall student experience?
- Thinking about the University in 10 years' time, describe one change you would want to see to the support and facilities available to University of Nottingham students.

Our international geography

Summary

- We are a single university with campuses in three countries – and there is no intention of changing this position
- There is increasing turbulence around international student recruitment – with a shift in public attitudes
- There are real opportunities to expand our range of international partnerships and doing more within our current university geography
- We want your views on enhancing our international partnerships and supporting our students to develop a global outlook

Our position

The University of Nottingham is a single university with campuses in three countries. Our overall strategy, mission and values are the same wherever we operate. The realisation of these through implementation plans and operating models varies according to the context, including the differing governance and legal frameworks in China, Malaysia and the UK.

The main purpose of having campuses in three countries is to extend the reach of the University and what it stands for, enhancing our global reputation and impact. While our operations are expected to cover their costs, our reason for operating in three countries is not directly to generate income but to have a global reach.

Beyond our own presence in China and Malaysia, the University's teaching and research extend into most of the countries of the world with students and staff from more than 150 countries and an extensive programme of educational, research and business partnerships. These include a substantial Erasmus plus programme; membership of the Universitas 21 network and a wide range of exchange and mobility opportunities for students across 250 partner institutions. Increasingly, just as the University reached out into Malaysia, almost 20 years ago, and more recently into China, the Asia campuses are themselves reaching out into Asia from UNM and UNNC).

Strategic partnerships and collaborations initiated at institutional level sit alongside support and encouragement to individual research groups to collaborate with the very best in their field internationally and for schools to be open to excellent international opportunities for our students wherever these are available.

University of Nottingham UK (UNUK) has had some success in increasing the number of international students in recent years, although this has included more postgraduate and fewer undergraduate students than planned. UNM and UNNC both attract students from outside China and Malaysia, with UNM's "ASEAN and Beyond" initiative reaching out to deliver University of Nottingham courses across South-East Asia which currently includes Singapore, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India.

GS2020 included an ambition that 30% of our undergraduate students should spend time abroad as part of their programmes. We are likely to fall somewhat short of that ambition with take-up of mobility opportunities very uneven across the University particularly amongst UK based students.

The external context

In the UK the country's relationship with the rest of Europe has entered a period of unprecedented turbulence as a result of Brexit and the recent changes in the regulatory environment for Higher Education. It is likely that this turbulence will affect us in practical ways, perhaps in relation to issues around student fees, recruitment and visas and European partnership programmes. However exactly what the impact will be is not clear at the time of writing. Alongside these matters and potentially of greater relevance to our high level strategy is a shift in public attitudes in the UK and overseas. While UK higher education is generally well thought of, perceptions of the UK turning its back on the wider world, however inaccurate, are gaining currency around the world.

Although the risk presented to UK universities by this perception is arguably reduced, because the US is also presenting an unwelcoming face to immigration, regions such as Canada and Australia may be well placed to increase their intake of international students. Location is also becoming less relevant to the increasing numbers of students who participate in online and distance learning programmes.

Patterns of international movement for study are changing, influenced by factors such as national growth, wealth distribution and household income. While the strongest annual growth rates in

participation in tertiary education are predicted to occur in Asian economies, students are increasingly likely to stay in the eastern hemisphere as Asian institutions develop their capacity. UNM and UNNC may be well-placed to benefit from this shift in behaviour.

Our choices

Building enduring relationships and partnerships that are mutually beneficial is a long-term endeavour and one which requires a substantial investment of time and thought. With this in mind we could take a more targeted and selective approach to prioritising our international partnerships to ensure that we focus on those that have the potential to develop across a number of different facets of our strategy.

Thinking about expanding our range of partnerships and bringing a University of Nottingham education to potential students from across the world, we could develop a more directed and explicit approach to deciding which country will lead in developing which future partnership opportunities.

Our international footprint gives the University a strong foundation for thinking in a creative and broad way about how we can support our students to develop a global outlook – not just focussing on student mobility in the traditional sense. We have the opportunity to consider how the curriculum and the campus experience can provide different types of global opportunity.

Views expressed so far

Discussion of our geography, global reach and international partnerships did not feature strongly in the 21st Century University (21CU) conversations but the comments made were broadly supportive of expanding our range of international partnerships and doing more to make the most of our current geography.

Some staff have expressed concern that we are operating too much as three separate entities, for example, in relation to recruitment of postgraduate students.

Is anything ruled in or out?

There is no intention of changing the position that we are one University with campuses in the UK, China and Malaysia.

Consultation Questions:

- What one change would you suggest to make the most of our three-country geography in relation to research, education or social impact?
- We have many opportunities to build and enhance our international partnerships. Which should we prioritise?
- What developments should we focus on to give more students an international experience as part of their University of Nottingham education?

Our civic role

Summary

- We make an estimated £677 million annual contribution to the Nottingham economy (and significant impact in our China and Malaysia communities too)
- Our Civic and Regional Committee aims to deepen our impact in the city and region
- The Universities for Nottingham initiative brings a new collaborative approach to delivering combined civic impact
- Staff are eager to see the University's civic mission emphasised in our strategy
- We want your views on the ways we should make a civic contribution to each of our localities

Our position

Civic contribution was the moving principle when the University of Nottingham was founded. The University is a major contributor to the local economy in each of the communities in which it is based. We make an estimated £677 million annual contribution to the economy of Nottingham and contribute widely to healthcare, the arts, education and other social impacts in the East Midlands, Ningbo, Zhejiang province, Semenyih and Kuala Lumpur.

Compared to many Russell Group universities, Nottingham has been heavily involved in securing EU structural funds that are focused on supporting smaller firms and the enterprise ecosystem in the East Midlands. Over the last 20 years, we have regenerated

an industrial brownfield site into a thriving innovation park employing 1,000 people. Our Medical School is an engine of healthcare training, innovation and funding for the NHS, in Nottingham, Derby and now Lincoln. We sponsor three local academy schools and deliver three million hours of widening participation activity every year. Our Lakeside Arts Centre is a genuine community asset and we fund cultural activities in the city where the city council cannot.

In addition to this, our research, innovation and teaching has an enormous, and probably unquantifiable, impact on our locality.

However, only a relatively small proportion of the University's students are drawn from the local community (in 2017/18, seven per cent of UNUK students recorded Nottingham or Nottinghamshire as their home – a similar proportion to those from China studying at UNUK). Recent focus groups in Nottingham have clearly identified a stark difference between socio-economic groups in how they perceive and access the University. The relatively small size of the city and the slow pace of economic development since 2008, compared to places like Manchester or Birmingham, means that the 60,000 students that live here and their impacts (both good and bad) on housing, development and communities are more visible.

The University has played an important role in creating and shaping the national UPP Foundation Civic University Commission, whose report (*Truly Civic: Strengthening the connection between universities*

and their places), received strong cross-party support and was widely welcomed by the sector. The report highlights the role and potential contribution of civically-engaged universities, like Nottingham, with a global footprint, alongside universities which are civic in the sense of being primarily local in their focus. The University recently pledged to develop a Civic University Agreement as one of the recommendations of the report.

A Civic and Regional Committee was formed in September 2018 and has begun work in the UK to help deepen our impact on our city and region. The committee will collaborate with colleagues at UNNC and UNM to share best practice and develop a unique civic mission across all three countries.

Our campuses are open to the public with cultural and showcase events regularly drawing in visitors from the local community. Against this, there is anecdotal evidence that local people are not aware that the campuses are open to them and that many of our neighbours never set foot on campus.

The city of Nottingham includes some of the areas of England with the lowest educational attainment and lowest participation in higher education. The University operates an extensive programme of outreach and support with local schools and colleges aimed at raising aspiration and attainment, which are not necessarily directed specifically at studying at the University of Nottingham itself.

The University has a proud record of collaboration with, and support to, business and industry, including a strong portfolio of services in support of local small and medium sized enterprises.

The external context

The significance of the civic role of universities has great currency within the higher education sector at present. However, this debate is largely confined to the university sector and its most direct stakeholders, with limited visibility in the mainstream media where concern around individual value for money from universities is much more prominent.

In Nottingham, however, the *Universities for Nottingham* initiative has recently been announced in collaboration with Nottingham Trent University. Both universities have working together on a brand new approach to their combined civic impact, which will see both universities look at how they might better collaborate with each other and partners across the area to help support the future of economic growth in Nottingham and the life chances of its citizens. Both universities will undertake a joint assessment of their economic, social and cultural impact on the local area – consulting partners across Nottingham about their challenges and priorities – before launching a joint civic programme in autumn 2019.

Views expressed so far

The 21st Century University consultation indicated that staff were eager to see the University's civic contribution emphasised in our strategy. Views as to what this might involve were very varied, with some colleagues seeing this as focused on opening up physical access to our campuses, and others seeing the concept of a civic university as encompassing our service to and impact on wider society in the broadest sense.

Is anything ruled in or out?

The University will continue to aspire to achieve global impact through the excellence of its research and teaching. Against that background, it would not be appropriate to constrain the pool of talent from which we recruit staff and students by favouring local applicants for jobs or academic programmes, or to focus our research endeavour solely, or even mainly, on challenges of local significance.

Some commentators have expressed the view that in cities like Nottingham, with two universities, one of the two (usually the newer) should be perceived as the civic university with the main responsibility for engaging with local economic and social issues. This view is ruled out of consideration for our new strategy.

Consultation Questions:

- In what ways should the University make a civic contribution?
- Should we do more to open up our campuses and facilities to local communities?
- If so, what specific activity would you suggest?

Teaching and learning

Summary

- The University enjoys a strong reputation for excellence in learning and teaching
- The majority of our educational offer is traditional, while student expectations on access to higher learning are changing
- There is a desire from staff to integrate our research and teaching
- We will not reduce our efforts to widen participation
- We want your views on being at the forefront of innovation in teaching, learning and assessment and the focus for that

Our position

The University enjoys a strong reputation for excellence in learning and teaching, with many external accolades including institutional gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework and a SETARA 5-star rating (in the mature category) in Malaysia.

Significant investment in recent years has been made both in infrastructure to support learning and in staff development. The new Teaching and Learning Building at University Park in Nottingham has been designed to support different learning styles, to enable individual and collaborative study, and to foster interactive teaching methods. The Tuanku Zara Teaching Centre is a recent addition which enhances the teaching and learning space in Malaysia.

Our curriculum offers a wide range of options to students. Recent innovations include the introduction of more affiliated foundation programmes delivered within faculties and through the University of Nottingham International College (TUNIC); and more inter-disciplinary programmes, such as Liberal Arts and Natural Sciences and, more recently, programmes in cancer science and contemporary slavery. In Malaysia, the *ASEAN and Beyond* initiative reaches out into Asia offering its courses in countries such as Singapore, Sri Lanka and India. A project funded by the World Bank and Bangladesh is currently upskilling over 10,000 school and college lecturers with a mixture of on-campus and in-country delivery.

There is considerable evidence of good practice in teaching across the University. However, we are only slowly expanding the range of educational models that we offer. The majority of our academic programmes conform to the norm of three to four-year undergraduate and one-year postgraduate taught, with a core of 50-minute lectures and module-end assessments. Our offer of degree apprenticeships, industry-led continuous professional development (CPD) programmes and online learning is limited but growing. There are limited plans to expand the number of undergraduate programmes which start at times other than the beginning of our standard academic year.

We work with our students on the design and delivery of our programmes of study, moving beyond consultation to co-creation, working, for example, through our Students as Change Agents programme. We are working with an international network of universities to explore how we might design multi-centre programmes that would take students to a number of different institutions for different aspects of their programmes.

Our academic quality approval processes are arguably more difficult to navigate for programmes and changes which do not conform to the traditional norms. Benchmarking evidence in the UK suggests that our teaching costs are higher than those of comparable universities, with the complexity of our curriculum part of the explanation.

The external context

The range of university-level education options is expanding rapidly as more institutions look to develop beyond the traditional formats of degree level education. Assessment is also under scrutiny across the sector, with concern about grade inflation and the evidence of a persistent attainment gap for black and minority ethnic students, mature students and those from “non-traditional” backgrounds.

Expectations of how education will support individuals’ working lives are changing with multiple career changes the norm for a workforce who will be navigating the ‘fourth industrial revolution’ with boundaries blurring between the physical, digital and biological worlds.

Prospective students have access to many options for their higher learning, including work-based, online, blended and international programmes. Longer careers with more varied professional jobs should also increase the demand for shorter, more focused programmes of learning, rather than the traditional one-off, full-time three-year undergraduate programme.

Meanwhile, ever-increasing public scrutiny of universities centres on the value for money offered to students. There is every sign that regulation of undergraduate programmes in particular will continue to increase, particularly in the UK and Malaysia.

Views expressed so far

A powerful appetite for further innovation in our approaches to learning, teaching and assessment is evident in the discussion at the recent 21st Century University events.

Also clear is a desire to integrate our research and teaching excellence, engaging students at all levels in research as well as strengthening the connections between our research groups and our teaching activity.

Is anything ruled in or out?

University Executive Board is clear that the University should continue to work on making a University of Nottingham education available to all – there is no intention of reducing our efforts to widen participation.

While cross-fertilisation between our research and teaching is a great strength, we will continue to ensure that the programmes, courses and modules offered align to student demand and fit together in a coherent manner, rather than being mainly driven by the research interests of staff.

Consultation Questions:

- Staff have suggested that the University should aim to be at the forefront of innovation in curriculum design, learning, teaching and assessment. What developments should we prioritise?
- How should we create stronger connections between the University's research and teaching?
- What change do you think would have the most impact on the teaching and learning experience of University of Nottingham students?

Research and knowledge exchange (RKE)

We recognise that this section covers a wide range of important matters for the future of the University. By bringing RKE together in this way we aim to ensure that our thinking is joined-up from one end to the other of the RKE spectrum.

Summary

- The University has an ambitious Research Vision
- A new RKE strategy is underway
- Harnessing the power of RKE to benefit society is increasingly vital
- It will not be possible to increase current levels of internal funding for research
- We want your views on how we can create stronger connections between research and teaching, and the areas of focus for RKE

Our position

In 2017, the University adopted a Research Vision to deliver research of global significance; developing solutions to global challenges and a step-change in our performance against the following goals:

- to enhance research excellence and quality by 40%
- to be a top five institution in the UK and top 60 university globally
- to increase funding for research by 50% to a portfolio value of £750 million

- to drive a step-change in the impact of research in preparation for the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2021) and the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF)

The Vision and associated implementation programme extend beyond the life of the current University strategy (GS2020) and will be adjusted as necessary to align to our new strategy.

The first year saw the recruitment of 36 fellows and significant awards and accolades for our researchers. Support for researchers includes investment in digital research and support infrastructure to help with the delivery of improved outputs, with further planned investment for year two of the programme and beyond.

As part of the Research Vision, we have developed six Beacons of Excellence spanning all five faculties to deliver major challenge-led research programmes. These are part of our wider research ecosystem, which also includes five transdisciplinary global research themes and research priority areas, the aim to recruit 100 Nottingham research fellows, investment in physical and digital capabilities, international collaboration, and support for commercialisation and industry collaboration.

The recently launched Institute for Policy and Engagement reflects our commitment to the exchange of knowledge and impact to enrich policy-making, while the current review of research capacity and ambition at our Malaysia and China campuses will present future opportunities across the University.

Continued priorities include delivering a research environment where excellent research can flourish; attracting and retaining world-class research talent; providing researchers the support and space to deliver excellence; and focusing on quality research outputs as we lead up to REF 2021. The Nottingham Impact Accelerator and Research Accelerator, both launched in 2018, are part of this effort.

Work continues to align better with UK and global strategic priorities, to ensure that our research continues to have relevance and impact both now and in the years to come.

RKE is central to delivering the societal benefits set out in our mission. The development of a new RKE strategy is underway. We are currently second in the UK for commercial income – 64% (£77 million) of which is enabled by knowledge exchange. We've invested in Nottingham Technology Ventures to support our spin-out portfolio, which delivered a record year for investment in 2018.

The external context

In a time of uncertainty, harnessing the power of RKE to benefit society is increasingly important. The UK Government's Industrial Strategy has set an ambition to increase investment in research and development by 40% to 2.4% of GDP.

The impact of Brexit on research funding remains unclear. There is concern that EU research funding will become more difficult for UK-based researchers to access. Some charities are also looking at awarding more of their funds outside the UK. The new UK landscape, developed by UK Research and Innovation, is bringing changes in how calls are developed, the requirements

for drawing up proposals, and with additional constraints related to the increased proportion of research funding tied to overseas development and national productivity investment fund budgets.

While the quality and relevance of our research leads to a substantial level of external funding, we currently recoup just over 70% of the total cost of the research we undertake from external funders, which is less than other comparable universities.

External scrutiny of our research and its impact continues with the REF and the new KEF, alongside the requirements of individual research funders. The place of university research is also being called into question as part of an increasing public suspicion of 'experts' and a reliance on crowd-sourcing of information.

The trend towards large collaborations across multiple disciplines, institutions and countries seems set to continue. This interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary model presents some challenges to our ways of working which need to adapt to accommodate research which is not neatly aligned to individual schools or faculties.

Views expressed so far

Research was the most used word in the 21st Century University consultation comments. Amid detailed concerns about funding sources, metrics, quality and publications, was a strong view that research remains vital to the identity of the University, and to its reputation and success. There were differing views about the value of having grand themes for research as opposed to a bottom-up, blue skies, fundamental approach. There was enthusiasm for strengthening the connections between the University's research and teaching portfolios.

A survey on the University's Research Vision is underway as this wider consultation goes to press. The results of the Research Vision survey will be considered by the University strategy team alongside responses to this Green Paper.

Is anything ruled in or out?

The future funding climate for the University will almost certainly mean that it will not be possible to increase the current level of internal funding for research.

Consultation Questions:

- How can we create stronger connections between research and teaching?
- What areas of RKE should we prioritise?
- Where should the University focus its support for research on a scale from blue-skies discovery research to research commissioned to solve a specific known problem?

Financial health

Summary

- The University has limited financial reserves but also relatively low debt levels
- Beyond 2020 we face a period of significant change in the financial context
- We can improve our financial position through more income generation and greater efficiency
- We want your views on how we can increase our income or reduce costs

In the interests of length, this section does not set out all the complexity of financial structures for each campus but focuses on the position of the University as a whole. As with all sections of this consultation document, we are keen to hear from people across the University community in China, Malaysia and the UK.

Our position

The University has a combined turnover of approximately £785 million per year (across the UK, Malaysia and China). Our agreed financial strategy is to ensure that the University can fund its goals now and for the foreseeable future, with annual income exceeding annual expenditure. As a public service organisation with charitable objectives, all surpluses are re-invested in the University's core activities.

Roughly 60% of our income relates to teaching and learning, 20% relates to research activity and another 20% relates to our commercial activities.

The University currently has net debt of £100 million and has set a financial strategy that maintains this level of debt – we will not increase it but we will also not seek to repay it. This means that every penny that we generate is invested back into the University and we do not build up cash reserves.

In the UK, at the moment, our financial model means that what we receive is what it costs to educate home and EU students. We receive more from international students and some commercial income which, together with external funding, is used to support our research.

The Nottingham Impact Campaign, which concluded in 2017, was highly successful and raised £242 million over six years.

Internal financial arrangements aim both to recognise and reward income generation in schools and faculties, and to ensure that common services are properly resourced. The detail of these arrangements are under review in 2019, although the objectives remain.

In common with any large and complex organisation, opportunities exist to improve the University's financial position through income generation and greater financial efficiency. Benchmarking against similar universities confirms that these opportunities exist. A Continuous Improvement Plan is in place to support leaders, managers and staff in realising them.

The external context

The University sector in the UK has so far avoided funding reductions which have driven extensive restructuring/redundancy programmes in other parts of the UK public service, notably local government. Arguably this has also shielded the sector from the imperative to consider fundamental change in the interests of efficiency. It is very unlikely that this relatively benign financial context will continue for much longer against the background of challenges to the UK and world economies.

Beyond 2020 we face a period of significant change in the financial context. While the scale and nature of change to English undergraduate fees and funding is uncertain, it is very likely that the total per student will reduce in the short to medium term, possibly by a significant amount. Competition across the university sector for other sources of income, including continuous professional development and business engagement work, international student fees and research funding, is likely to intensify. Cost pressures in the same time period include providing for pensions and for essential maintenance and investment.

Consultation Questions:

- If you could make one practical change that would increase our income or reduce our costs, what would it be?
- What barriers do you perceive which prevent us from doing more to generate income to invest in our core purpose?
- We currently recoup just over 70p from external sources for every £1 we spend on research. What should we do to increase that proportion?

Our choices

If we wish to continue to maintain our teaching and research excellence in a more hostile financial climate, we will need to work together as a university community to ensure that we improve our efficiency at every opportunity. We may also need to consider some tough choices to ensure that our resources are properly focused on our priorities.

Views expressed so far

Financial matters were energetically discussed at the 21st Century University consultation events. Whilst a small number of the comments recorded simply expressed a desire for more resources, the large majority of comments related to opportunities to reduce waste and improve efficiency. A significant number of comments also related to the allocation of resources and our internal financial arrangements, including concerns that these create perverse incentives, or that they lack transparency.

Is anything ruled in or out?

As prudent stewards of the university for future generations, UEB has ruled out increasing the University's current borrowing levels, and committed to generating cash surpluses each year to invest in maintaining and developing the University.

Our Infrastructure

Summary

- The University has an extensive and diverse estate
- Work is beginning on a new Estates Masterplan for the UK
- There are ever-increasing expectations around sustainability
- We are undertaking a major digital investment programme
- We want your views on aspirations for digital technology, areas to prioritise as we develop our future estate, and changes to inspire and engage staff and students

Our position

The University's needs for infrastructure (spaces, places, technology, equipment, physical and digital) to support our mission and priorities are as complex and varied as our activities, spanning learning, teaching and research across varied disciplines, as well as all the other activities which make up the life of the University community. From advanced robotics laboratories to student halls of residence, from world-class sports facilities to farms, our infrastructure is nothing if not diverse.

With over 1,900 acres of land across its UK, China and Malaysia estate, the University has undertaken an extensive programme of new-build activity over the lifetime of the current strategy. The University community has benefited from new facilities across teaching, research and student activities, with many of these supported by the generosity of donors. But we

should also acknowledge the challenge of ensuring that older buildings are kept up to standard to meet current and future needs.

The University is coming to the end of a very difficult implementation of a new student record system (Campus Solutions). The challenges of this programme have to some extent overshadowed other recent investments in our digital infrastructure.

Looking forward in relation to digital, the University is in the early stages of a major investment programme designed to advance our digital maturity, delivering significant changes to culture and ways of working as well as embedding transformative technology. We are currently working in partnership with Microsoft to consult the University community about the development of our future digital vision.

Across the University, examples of exciting and innovative practice sit alongside an acknowledged need for investment in some of our fundamental systems and processes, our own skills and capability across the digital space. We also face significant challenges in relation to data governance and cyber-security which feature highly on the University's current risk assessments.

The external context

Alongside the development of the new University strategy, and informed by it, work is beginning on a new Estates Masterplan for the UK campuses which will offer staff and students the opportunity to contribute their views in more detail in relation to our physical estate in the UK. Among the external factors, which will be significant as we develop the masterplan, are ever-increasing expectations around sustainability.

There is evidence of pressure on our facilities as a result of recent expansion in the numbers of students both overall and in particular areas, in addition to an increasing challenge to ensure suitable distribution of teaching spaces. In UNNC, facilities are approaching capacity at the current site.

The accelerating pace of change in available technology and services will continue to offer a dazzling range of opportunities across all aspects of the University's work. Clear vision, digital confidence and agile ways of working will be needed to ensure we seize the opportunities. Each new generation of students and researchers bring a fresh set of technology expectations, and our research activity will bring ever greater reliance on data storage and processing. Alongside more eye-catching innovations, proper stewardship and effective use of data resources and analytics offer more powerful opportunities to improve efficiency and quality in services to students, staff and researchers.

Our choices

As set out in the section on financial sustainability, funds for investment will be hard-won. There will always be more opportunities to develop our infrastructure than our available investment funds can support. One of the purposes of the new strategy will be to help guide those investment choices.

Views expressed so far

Among staff, the 21st Century University conversations showed a real appetite for digital innovation, which sat alongside some frustration with basic aspects of our existing infrastructure, and a strong desire for more support in developing staff skills and capability.

The strong themes in relation to our physical infrastructure included a wish for more collaborative and social spaces across campus, a desire to combine teaching and research in the same physical space, and real pride in some of our estate, notably University Park in Nottingham.

Is anything ruled in or out?

In each country, the intention is to ensure that our University community is co-located in one city or area – developing a substantial physical presence at a distance from Nottingham, Ningbo and Semenyih is not an option being considered. Any expansion should ensure that all students feel part of one community and the existing management team in each country must be able to manage all campuses and retain the same single identity.

Consultation Questions:

- Thinking about digital technology, on the following scale, where should the University of Nottingham aspire to be from “we make the most of technology which is in general use” to “we push the boundaries, embracing technologies as they emerge”?
- Which developments would you prioritise as we manage and develop our physical estate for the future?
- Thinking about the University in the next ten years, what change in our infrastructure would you want to see from the present day to inspire and engage students and staff?

