



University of  
Nottingham

UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

# People and Culture Strategy

Overview 2023-26





University of  
Nottingham

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Supporting the  
health, safety and  
wellbeing of all  
our people

Transforming  
how we  
support staff



Engaging  
with local  
and global  
community

Realising the  
potential of  
our people

Fostering an  
inclusive culture,  
underpinned by  
our values

### Our Values

Inclusivity, Ambition, Openness, Fairness and Respect

## Introduction

2022 brought many global challenges and it is within that context that we have written a People and Culture Strategy, responding to the ever-changing environment in which we are working and operating. We will continue to experience challenges and need to reflect and learn from the incredibly difficult last few years, understanding the impact that this has had on the people who represent our University community.

Expectations of people coming out of a global pandemic have changed and employers need to be able to respond positively to this. We need to find new ways of working, taking pride and excitement in the work that we are doing as a University but also being mindful of the needs of our people and the importance of creating some stability and sense of security.

Our People and Culture Strategy is ambitious for the University as well as for all the individuals who work here. It builds on our learning over recent years, how we respond to problems, experiment with a response, see if that works and, if not, change track. Whilst we need to retain those skills, we also need to transition to a place of greater stability. The People and Culture Strategy provides a framework to create sound foundations on which to build over coming years.

We need to be able to set clear expectations for our people, based on trust and engagement. We need to build strong and effective relationships, supporting people to flourish and develop and to get the best from our people as an employer. We need to make informed choices which benefit us all, building on successes and productivity in really challenging times.

Inclusivity runs throughout the People and Culture strategy and reflects the new approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at the University with it embedded into all aspects of our people work as standard practice. A strong relationship exists between the Pro Vice Chancellor of EDI and People and HR colleagues and the aspiration is for all policies and processes to be inclusive by design and for our people development programmes to include opportunities to develop skills to have open conversations, learn from others lived experiences and gain a greater appreciation of the systemic and societal inequalities that those with protected characteristics may face. Sitting under

the strategy there will be a range of detailed action plans, including the Race Equality Charter and Athena SWAN.

From a wellbeing perspective, we need to understand how we can work better together, how we can collectively make a difference and deliver on University ambitions. This will involve looking at areas such as job design, understanding the expectations of our people, providing support which builds on success and developing our people.

We need to understand what it means for us to be agile, working in different ways that work well for Individuals and teams, in the University context.

How we communicate as a University community is going to be key. We need to understand what is happening with people through the one-on-one conversations that are taking place across the University. Success will be dependent on cultivating effective mechanisms which enable people to speak up, listening to what they are saying and taking action.

Being agile, listening, celebrating difference, responding, checking-in, experimenting and going again will enable us to embed this People and Culture Strategy and realise the potential in all of us.

People are our greatest asset, and our values of inclusivity, ambition, openness, fairness and respect has to underpin everything we do. This is reflected in our ambitions for our People and Culture Strategy 2023 – 2026.

**Katherine Linehan**

PVC for Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and People

**Jaspal Kaur**

Director of HR

# How will the People and Culture Strategy help?

## Vision

# Transforming how we support staff



## Outcome

We will ensure that resources, systems and processes are in place which enable people to be as effective as they can be. HR will put the needs of their customers at the forefront of their thinking to drive forward delivery of excellent HR services.

Leaders and managers will be empowered to communicate with, and lead, their teams, aligned to the University of Nottingham's inclusive culture.

Everyone will have a clear set of accountabilities and responsibilities that are aligned to the Strategy and purpose of the University.

Our decisions and actions will be driven by the need to achieve flexibility and simplification where possible, reflecting the University's values of inclusivity, ambition, openness, fairness and respect.

## Themes and programmes of work

### Technology as an Enabler

We will deliver streamlined HR processes and improved digital people management capabilities through the Digital Core project. Deliverables will support self-service, the streamlining and simplification of people processes, and the identification of clearer accountabilities. The project will also see the introduction of an organisation hierarchy which will give better visibility of our University structures, facilitating collaboration, enabling empowered approvals and the introduction of establishment control, which will provide greater visibility to support the management of organisational design. Digital Core will also facilitate enhanced reporting capability which will be particularly key to our inclusivity work and aid decision making. HR will align its operations to ensure that it fully harnesses the opportunities of new technology and will embed a culture of continuous improvement in the way that it delivers its services.

### Business Partnering

The HR Business Partnering function is to be strengthened, with a clear focus on HR Business Partners playing a key role in supporting the delivery of Faculty and Departmental Business Plans, ensuring that HR resources are aligned where they achieve greatest impact. HR Business Partnering will also play a key role in supporting Faculties and Departments in coaching and delivery of all aspects of people related activities which promote engagement, organisational performance and drive organisational culture aligned to University's values. Effective partnerships across professional services will also promote a whole system approach in relation to the delivery of the people elements of the University Strategy.

# How will the People and Culture Strategy help?

## Management Information and Data as an Enabler

We will develop a comprehensive HR Data Plan which will include the tracking and monitoring of progress against the HR Transformation programme and delivery of the HR Delivery Plan. Timely and consistent data will support better data led decision making, ensuring that resources can be allocated to areas of greatest need and impact. The production of regular HR Dashboards will provide Faculties and Departments with up to date information on all aspects of people related matters and will enhance HR Business Partnering.

## Resourcing

We will undertake a programme of development to improve capability and enhance our approach to resourcing. This will include:

- realising the benefits of streamlined processes enabled through Digital Core.
- streamlining the user recruitment journey and making more equitable through the different recruitment channels of HR, Unitemps and external sourcing.
- embedding inclusive recruitment practices including the use of anonymous recruitment.
- development of global mobility and the framework for managing overseas working.
- development of a clear and inclusive Employee Value Proposition to support attraction and retention with a focus on underrepresented groups.
- embedding the use of talent/succession planning.
- improving the onboarding and induction experience for new starters to engender a strong sense of belonging.

## Policy Development

We will establish a dedicated HR Policy function to review and develop HR Policies which support delivery of the University's Strategy. HR policies will be developed using a governance framework, use inclusive language and be aligned to the University's Policy Governance Framework. This will ensure that policy development will be underpinned by comprehensive communication and stakeholder engagement plans, rigorous Equality Impact Assessments, training programmes and the production of supporting 'how to' guidance for managers and staff, clearly defining accountabilities and responsibilities.

## Agile Working

HR will work in partnership with the Agile Working Project to shape how we work in the future. Learning from the challenges presented during the pandemic and the opportunity to create a more inclusive culture and workforce, we will be looking to realise the benefits of working in a different way, utilising time, technology, working spaces and the campus in the best way possible in order to deliver the University's Strategic ambitions.

## Statutory Training and Induction

We will be supporting compliance and assurance through the delivery of statutory training for all staff, aligned by role. We will also ensure that all staff are supported with an inspiring induction, which will include a focus on organisation-wide collaborations, promote opportunities for networking and the development of support networks to create a sense of belonging for all.

# How will the People and Culture Strategy help?

## Vision

Supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of all our people



## Outcome

People are our most important asset. We will provide a safe environment in which they can thrive in their role and we will create safe and trusting spaces which support open dialogue.

We will develop our campuses to answer the contemporary needs of our staff and students, creating new kinds of spaces, a secure and inclusive environment that supports the wellbeing of everyone; and rich and stimulating cultural and sporting life, open to all.

## Themes and programmes of work

### Wellbeing - Physical and Mental Health

Creating capacity and capability to lead an approach to physical wellbeing, emotional wellbeing including mental health awareness, financial wellbeing and social wellbeing, including collaboration and connecting with colleagues. Work in this area will include a proactive management of the Occupational Health Service provision and a coordinated approach to stress management, awareness raising and support for gynaecological and reproductive health and working with Equality networks to support all our people.

### Performance Frameworks

Work is being undertaken to strengthen the links between Appraisal and Development Conversations (ADC) and the University's business planning process, aligning objectives to deliverables within Faculty and Departmental Business Plans. In addition to this, we will be looking to establish clearer links between ADCs and work being undertaken in relation to recognition, values, behaviours and culture.

### Workforce Planning

We will align our improved digital and reporting capabilities with increased capability and capacity within our HR Talent Management and Organisational Development function to develop talent frameworks and workforce plans which support alignment between organisational capacity and capability, inclusive practices and the delivery of University Strategy.

### Supporting the Safety of our People

We will raise awareness of the importance of putting in place support for staff when addressing issues and concerns, providing guidance on what to do at the earliest possible time with a focus on the people impacts and how this fits with formal policies and procedures. We will ensure that policies are underpinned by effective learning programmes and we continue the development of effective staff networks and forums. We will look to provide support for our staff which mirrors that provided to the student community and reflects best practice across the HR sector. HR staff will be provided with specialist training to better equip them to support staff with complex and sensitive issues such as mental health. There will be a clear focus on early resolution, through the increased use of mediation and coaching.

# How will the People and Culture Strategy help?

## Vision

Fostering an inclusive culture, underpinned by our values



## Outcome

We have regard for each others rights and feelings, and demonstrate this in our behaviour, treating each other with kindness. We value and celebrate diversity and difference and are respectful and keen to learn from others lived experiences.

We adopt ways of working that enable our people to be the best they can be, that can realise their potential in role, and enables the University to realise its ambitions.

Our leaders are inclusive, cultivate a culture of trust and empowerment, and ensure there is a golden thread between the accountabilities and responsibilities in their teams, and the strategy for the University.

We will create a culture of trust and adopt a straightforward and transparent way of communicating with each other and with the world, championing the free exchange of ideas.

This work will be underpinned by the institutional Athena SWAN and Race Equality action plans.

## Themes and programmes of work

### Establishment of Support Frameworks for Staff to fulfil their Role

HR will fulfil a pivotal role in developing support frameworks for all staff. This work will include the provision of reasonable adjustments for disabled staff, diversification of the workforce and the promotion of development opportunities for all staff including a focus on antiracism and LGBT+ inclusion. Awareness raising and education will be provided for all staff. Bespoke learning will be developed for managers, thereby ensuring that they have the skills and knowledge to support their staff.

### Cultural Development

We will develop a programme aligned to embedding values through event management, together with informal learning and development programmes, which will be available for all levels of leader. We will celebrate our values throughout all University activity with an initial focus on assuming positive intent with our colleagues.

### Embedding Values

We will ensure that the University's values are embedded in all HR processes, policies and every day-to-day interaction to drive an inclusive culture. HR colleagues will role model how we wish to see the values lived across the University. This will also be driven through all leadership and management development programmes and aligned to a behavioural-based competency framework.

### Employee Engagement

We will define an engagement model for the University - outlining the vision for engagement of our people and the support available for our managers. The Director of HR and PVC EDI and People will work collectively with Equality networks, Staff Forums and with Trade Unions.

### Cultural Measurement

We will use appropriate measures to assess impact and identify areas for development. Sources of insight will include: People survey, Athena Swan, Race Equality Charter, charter marks, annual statutory reporting, equality impact assessments, governance and assurance frameworks and KPIs.

# How will the People and Culture Strategy help?

## Vision

Realising the potential of our people



## Outcome

We recruit the very best people, and provide opportunities for progression, realising individual professional ambitions.

We are a learning organisation and understand the importance of having a learning culture for our whole community, as individuals, teams and our University.

We understand the importance of effective collaborations. We set the highest standards for ourselves and our work, and support each other to achieve them. We are curious to learn new things, to innovate and enable others to try new things in a safe environment.

## Themes and programmes of work

### Total Pay & Reward

We will establish a dedicated Pay and Reward Function within HR to support the ongoing development of a University wide Pay and Reward Framework, which supports delivery of our University Strategy. Dedicated resource will maintain the integrity of our Pay and Reward Framework undertaking responsibility for job evaluations and pay and reward benchmarking and scrutiny to ensure equal opportunities for all whilst ensuring competitiveness in sector. We will work collaboratively to identify appropriate measures to reduce pay gaps. Timely reporting will ensure compliance with our legal obligations and will inform data-led decision making.

### Organisational Design

We will build in-house capacity and capability for advice and support on the current and future design of our University and our teams. We will determine our design principles to guide our decision-making, and link these to processes such as succession planning, career pathways, promotion criteria, competency frameworks and talent reviews.

### Becoming a Learning Organisation

Creating a shared vision for a learning organisation and a common understanding of how we bring the core components to life. Encouraging a two-way connection through University objectives, to ADC discussions, to learning outcomes and facilitating the join between self-led and organisational learning (and how we support both). This will require:

- horizon scanning for emerging or new capability gaps.
- clarity on the cultural underpinnings required to meet the conditions for learning and the skills to have open conversations.
- effective knowledge capture and transfer to help reduce duplication and increase effectiveness.
- an increased focus on frontline informal learning to augment the central formal learning programmes and initiatives.
- Learning support for staff across all job families, including Coaching / Mentoring (reciprocal) / Shadowing and Digital Learning.



# How will the People and Culture Strategy help?



## Leadership and Management

We will put in place organisation-wide development support to increase our understanding of leadership effectiveness, releasing potential through greater distribution of leadership, enabling greater agency at each level.

Organisation-wide development for all managers to help them to define what to do in various scenarios.

A greater emphasis on the importance of self-leadership as part of a wider recognition that everyone is a stakeholder in effective leadership.

Enable faculties and teams to share their excellence in Leadership and management and to network with each other to build up expertise.

Focused development in targeted areas of need includes:

- Heads of School / UEB / Senior Leaders.
- Faculties and Departments – aligned content to their own circumstances with a Learning and Development Manager to support their requirements.
- targeted development to support organisational wide understanding of groups of our staff, including but not limited to technical staff, gender specific, neurodiversity, disability awareness.
- supporting those through stages of career development e.g. LMA programmes / apprenticeships / graduate trainees / ILM programmes.

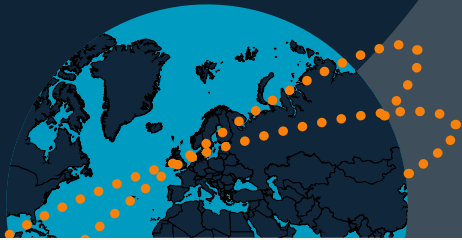
## Professional Recognition and Development

We will assess what to stop, start and continue in this area. This will involve identifying career pathways for all and determining the right learning content at each part of those pathways. It will also include embedding recognition support for all staff and implementing improved processes for existing schemes of recognition to ensure they are fair and equitable, including Lord Dearing, and the Teaching, Learning Observation College.

# How will the People and Culture Strategy help?

## Vision

Engaging with  
local and global  
community



## Outcome

The University will create an environment and community which reflects the diverse nature of our students and staff, where everyone can contribute and be appreciated for who they are.

We will create a sustainable environment, proactively challenging ourselves that we are offering a sustainable future and creating a positive impact for the local communities we serve, whilst enabling opportunities to share learning and best practice on a global scale.

## Themes and programmes of work

### Local partnership working, sustainability and civic impact

We will enable our partners to understand our cultural drivers and identify the partners where our cultures and ways of working closely align. We will use Castle Meadow Campus as a mechanism for testing and trailing how this will work in practice. We will develop volunteering programmes, which supports the realisation of our ambitions for civic and local engagement, and provides learning opportunities for all our people and teams.

### Global culture

We will define what it means for the University to be a global organisation. We will determine how far our cultures can align and will develop and drive activities to support that alignment. We will identify the key elements of the People Plan to test our global approach, commencing with Tri-campus dialogue around leadership and values.







## Key Milestones 2023-24

### Spring 2023

Review of promotions material in advance of promotions process 23/24

EDI data from people survey used to inform future priorities

#### From January 2023

Implementation of revised statutory training

#### April 2023

OD Managers in post and aligned to faculties, teams and departments to support cultural development.

#### April 2023

Testing approach to talent through certain targetted roles.

#### April 2023

Head of School / Dean and Department development programme launched.

#### May 2023

OD Manager aligned to agile working project to ensure we explore people impacts, and work with Policy manager to write an appropriate agile working policy.

### Summer 2023

Global Mobility Team established within HR.

#### May 2023

Establishment of a dedicated HR Policy function to oversee the review and development of HR Policies.

#### June 2023

Dedicated resource established within HR to manage and oversee service delivery of the University's OH provider.

#### June 2023

Talent Management resource in place to commence work on the development of Talent Management Frameworks.

Associate Director of Pay and Reward in post to develop Pay and Reward Strategy, with a specific focus on closing the ethnicity, gender and disability pay gaps.

#### July 2023

EDI Manager in post to drive forward key programmes including 'open conversation learning' for all, and aligning HR delivery to the needs of our equality networks.

#### June 2023

Neurodiversity learning in place

### Autumn 2023

Revised HR Business Partnering structure embedded.

New corporate welcome event launched.

#### September 2023

Induction for Organisation launched.

#### September 2023

Launch new LMA programme content and curriculum of learning for all staff.

Delivery of revised Dignity and Grievance procedures and the introduction of a policy to support Agile Working.

#### September 2023

New Athena SWAN action plan which will intersect with the REC plan will be in place.

#### September 2023

First of two organisational-wide events to celebrate our values, inclusivity, and connect our organisation. One face-to-face and one virtual event.

## Winter 2023

### End of 2023

Specialist training provided to key roles within HR, including HR Business Partnering, to enhance expertise when responding to complex and sensitive people related issues.

Inclusivity themed pulse survey.

## Spring 2024

Streamlined recruitment process in operation.

### March 2024

Digital Core: HR system launched.

### March 2024

Revised SLAs to be in place to monitor and track delivery of HR services.

### April 2024

Revised ADC framework to be launched, supported by new technology delivered as part of Digital Core.

HR data enabled through digital core to support equality networks.

## Summer 2024

All core HR policies to have been reviewed and implemented.

