



University of
Leicester

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Strategic Vision to 2015

The University of Leicester is a leading UK university committed to international excellence through the creation of world changing research and high quality, inspirational teaching within an inclusive academic culture.

Welcome to Leicester

We think a university should be about empowering people to explore what they do not know; through passionate, dedicated teaching and innovative, world-changing research. By embracing the fact that we are all coming at it from a slightly different perspective, and that every journey is personal, we have managed to achieve some remarkable results in our time.

We believe that the best universities are not just the privilege of elites. We are proof that you can stand alongside the best and open up the competition for everyone.

Some universities consider their primary purpose to be high quality research, others concentrate on excellent teaching. At Leicester we think that the two are not only complementary, they are inseparable. We believe that teaching is inspirational when delivered by passionate scholars engaged in world-changing research – and that research is stronger when delivered in an academic community that includes students.

With these ideas at heart, Leicester is re-framing the values that govern academia and re-defining what a university needs to be in the 21st century. We are constantly finding new ways of being a leading university.



Mission

The University of Leicester is a leading UK university committed to international excellence through the creation of world changing research and high quality, inspirational teaching within an inclusive academic culture.

Ambitions

We will consolidate our position as the most inclusive of Britain's top 20 leading universities.

We will become an established top ten UK University and rank in the top 150 institutions in the world.

Our growing research strength will underpin this change. We will build on our position as the pre-eminent university in the Midlands for teaching quality, student satisfaction and research impact.

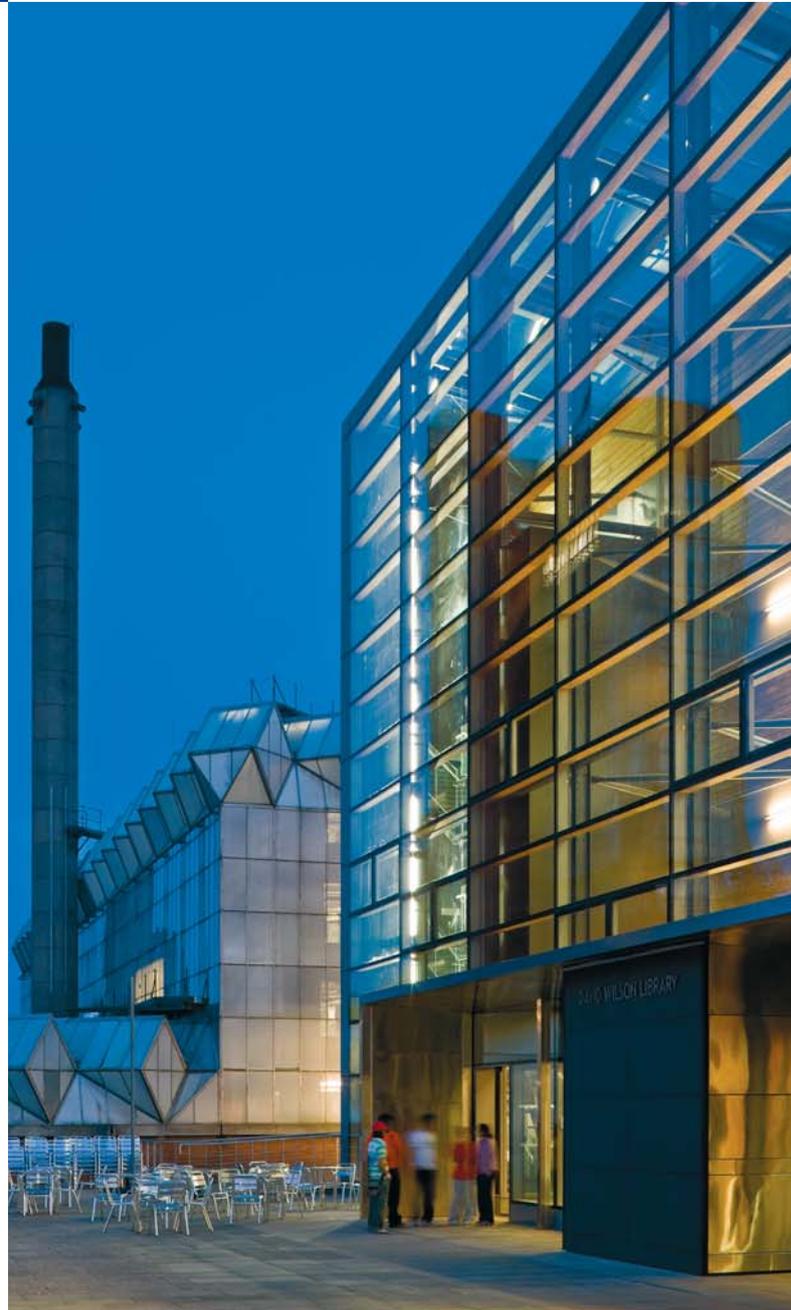
We will become Britain's top university for student satisfaction and teaching quality.

David Wilson Library at night ►
(Library images by Martine Hamilton Knight Photography)

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We will accomplish this by:

- Placing our belief that teaching and research are synergistic at the heart of our work. Our world-changing research underpins our teaching, leading to an exciting, intellectual experience in the classroom for our students. Our research takes place in a vibrant community of academics, postgraduate and undergraduate students.
- Producing research of international importance and excellence that is highly-cited and draws increasing funding from research councils, charities, Europe, government organisations and industry.
- Recruiting and retaining the very best staff. We will increasingly become the natural home for the most talented academics, administrative and support staff to work.
- Developing our estate to ensure the very best, state-of-the-art facilities are available to staff and students.
- Working in partnership with business and industry, including regional associations, to exploit our intellectual capital and create a highly skilled workforce.
- Delivering consistent and significant surpluses to re-invest in the academic mission of the University.
- Sustaining our position as a major UK provider of postgraduate education and as the UK's leading niche provider of distance-learning education.
- Delivering teaching and learning that is both innovative and effective, which allows the university to grow whilst maintaining both our commitment to inclusivity and the student experience.



Beliefs and Values

We believe that higher education is a power for good and makes a significant economic, intellectual and cultural contribution to the world.



- We are passionate about our work, our teaching and our research.
- We believe that higher education is a power for good and makes a significant economic, intellectual and cultural contribution to the world.
- We believe in the synergy between teaching and research. We are committed to producing high quality, significant research. This informs our teaching.
- We believe that academic potential is the only legitimate means of differentiating between candidates when offering places.
- We believe that a diverse student and staff body makes the University stronger.
- We believe that choosing to study a higher education course requires courage, commitment and effort. We undertake to provide first rate teaching and learning support to release potential in all our students.
- We are an international university which is committed to the region. We believe we best serve our region by sharing with it the benefits of our internationally-significant work.
- We believe that we improve and grow stronger by listening and learning from others.

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Our Challenges

We are proud of the progress we have made. Despite a more challenging financial climate we remain ambitious and optimistic for the future. Over the next five years we will establish our place amongst the top ten universities in the UK and amongst the top 150 institutions in the world. Our performance during the period of the last strategic plan justifies this optimism.

The environment faced by all universities over the coming years will be increasingly challenging as cuts in government funding bite deeply into our resources. However, recent achievements at Leicester make us confident that despite this challenging context, we will continue to invest and develop to reach our goals and fulfil our ambitious plans. The extension of variable fees, the introduction of the Research Excellence Framework and the increasingly global nature of our work will bring challenges and opportunities.

Student expectations for quality teaching and support services and systems will continue to rise, and there will be growing pressure towards collaboration and partnership in regional, national and international contexts. Advances in technology will provide new opportunities and challenges, as will the anticipated demographic down-turn in the eighteen-year-old population.

We are proud of our city and region. The last decade has seen the city transform. Links with mainland Europe, arising from the creation of St Pancras International Station as the Eurostar hub, have provided new opportunities for us to contribute nationally and internationally. We are a significant player in the local economy, generating £700m directly and indirectly into the regional economy.

There is no doubt, however, that the next phase of our development will require powerful leadership, significant determination and hard work, alongside a level of investment in the staff and fabric of the University which will enable us to continue to 'raise our game' in a turbulent environment.

Our primary ambitions are deliberately stated at this stage in our development by reference to external institutional rankings. Seeing our performance reflected in external ratings, notwithstanding the obvious caveats about the methodologies and purposes associated with these, sends a powerful message to us all that our ambitions are both justifiable and achievable.

Our on-going performance and position will be secured by:

- progressive growth in student numbers
- a commensurable increase in staff numbers
- the continuing improvement of the campus in line with the rolling development plan
- an increasingly robust financial position, supported by the development of new income streams allowing for the re-investment of surpluses to support research and teaching.

All new developments must be of the highest quality we can afford and deliver. Student and staff satisfaction must take priority. Sustainability (both environmental and in the sense of choosing long-term benefits over short-term gains) will characterise our decision-making.

The achievement of our overall vision for the University will be delivered through:

- strong leadership at University, College and Departmental level
- powerful planning and decision-making capacity
- high quality, well-motivated staff
- open and honest collaboration with the student body.

The achievement of our overall vision for the University will be supported by:

- detailed strategies for research, teaching and the estate
- the strategically-driven allocation of resources informed by reliable management information
- effective and facilitative corporate services and processes.

“ I firmly believe that Leicester is an outstanding University that has huge potential to improve its already excellent position even further, as demonstrated in this Strategic Vision. It is imperative that we set ourselves far-reaching goals in order to continue moving forward and ensure we remain highly regarded around the world. It is essential that everyone associated with the University has real vision and aims to achieve the very best in everything they do in order to realise these ambitions.”

PROFESSOR SIR ROBERT BURGESS, VICE-CHANCELLOR



The new Percy Gee Building

The achievement of our overall vision for the University will be monitored annually through the Indicators of Corporate Performance and Risk Management approved by the University's Council, including:

- our rankings in recognised league tables
- our financial performance
- developments in the University estate
- the inclusiveness of our academic and student community

The University has two core functions, world changing research and inspirational teaching, and all other activities complement these. The remainder of this vision statement is therefore confined to the ways in which the University's overall aims will be realised through achievements in research and teaching.

Our Research

World class universities are judged by the quality of their research. Acceleration into a more select group of universities will require a more determined and focussed strategy. We must therefore produce research (across the institution) which is regarded by the international research community and research assessments as meeting the highest standards of excellence.

The University must:

- work towards a REF 2013 outcome, which confirms the validity of its aspirations
- emphasise the requirement for all academic staff to seek the level of funding for research appropriate to their discipline and to provide them with the necessary support to achieve this
- emphasise the need for academic staff to communicate and disseminate their research findings in order to deliver maximum benefit and impact
- secure year-on-year increases in research grant and contract applications, awards and income
- significantly improve the ratio between research funding applications and approved awards through focusing on submission quality and applicability especially in the case of higher value applications
- utilise the College structure to develop and implement detailed interdisciplinary research plans
- isolate and promote research themes in which unchallengeable excellence can be demonstrated
- encourage and support applications for large awards for interdisciplinary, collaborative and translational research, creating research centres and collaborative groups when required
- seek partnerships with other universities and agencies to enhance mutual capacity
- strongly promote the commercialisation of research and knowledge transfer, including business partnerships, technology licences, spin-out companies and consultancies
- actively pursue potential sources of research funding in the non-public and non-UK sectors
- ensure that all appointments, promotions, mentoring, appraisal, development and personal reward systems for academic staff support the delivery of the vision
- direct funding to reward success, including the continuation of schemes such as New Blood lectureships and the strategic use of research infrastructure funding
- increase research student numbers across the University with an emphasis on securing external funding for these
- continuously scrutinise the operation of internal funding and incentive measures in order to ensure that they are working to deliver the intended vision.

The achievement of our vision for research will be delivered through:

- the appointment of academic staff of the highest quality
- the active championship of a research and enterprise driven culture throughout the University
- the application of detailed knowledge of government and funding priorities, including regional awareness.

The achievement of our vision for research will be supported by:

- investment in the research infrastructure
- responsive recruitment and promotion procedures
- staff mentorship, development, incentivisation and support.

“Leicester’s success is intimately related to its achievements in research. Looking to 2015, our researchers will be improving our understanding of the world we live in, through the advancement of knowledge and developing solutions that will provide both economic impact and enable change bringing benefits to society and people’s lives.”

KEVIN SCHÜRER, PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR
(RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE)

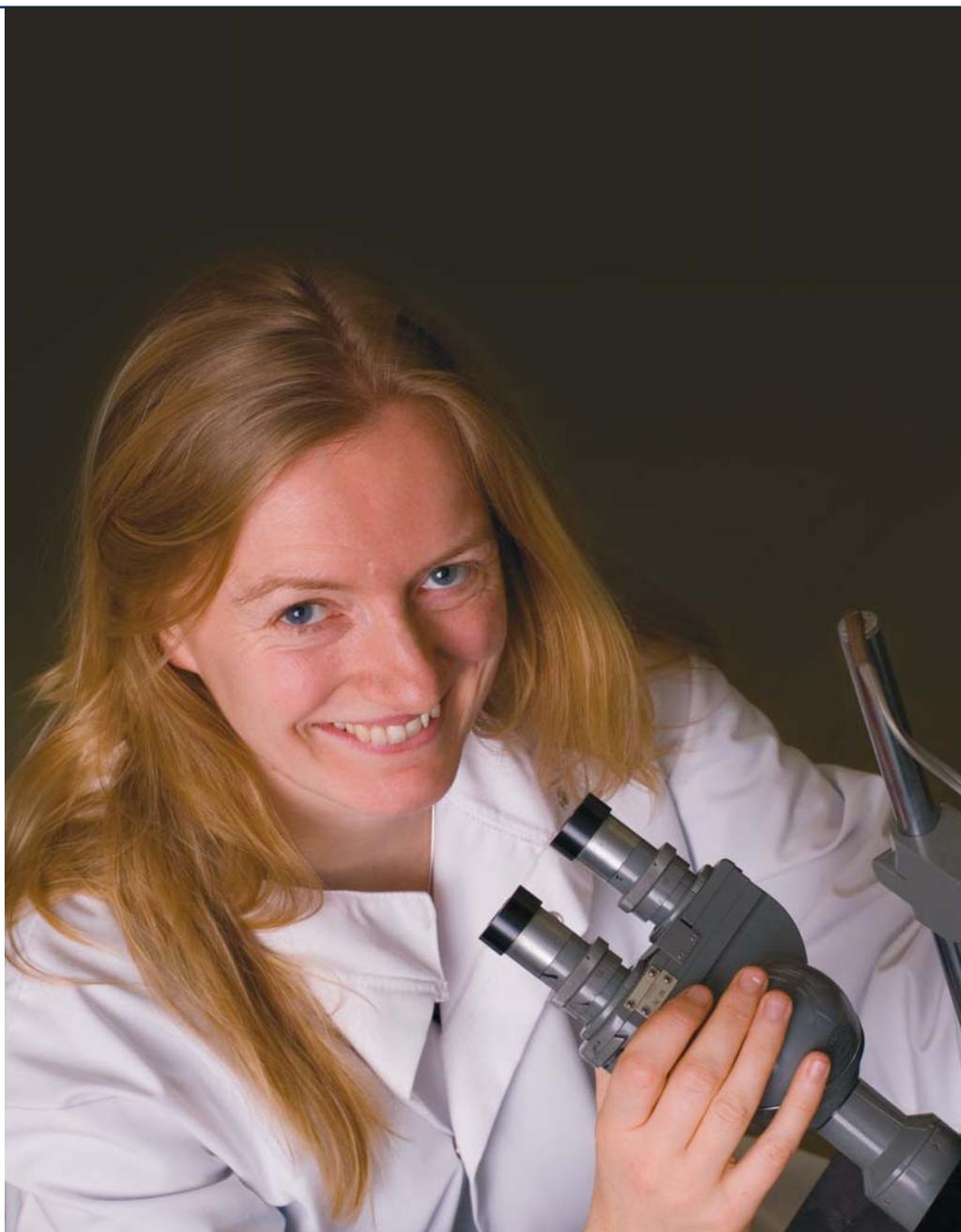


The achievement of our vision for research will be monitored through the regular scrutiny of evidence relating to:

- research grant and contract applications, awards and income
- income and activity levels for enterprise and business development
- institutional and subject-based performance measured against peer institutions
- research student recruitment and doctoral degrees awarded
- our state of readiness for the Research Excellence Framework exercise in 2013.

“The University of Leicester has been a great place to establish a research laboratory. The New Blood lectureship has allowed me to focus on my research and to attract funding for research assistance and equipment. I have a great team of post graduate students and am pursuing my interests in both environmental and medical microbiology.”

MARTHA CLOKIE,
NEW BLOOD LECTURER



Our Teaching

The University's vision for teaching is to become Britain's top university for student satisfaction and teaching quality. We have performed consistently well in the National Student Survey, but we cannot rely on one measure alone to achieve an unassailable position.

We must therefore:

- ensure that teaching is inspirational and informed by research in order to ensure that all students are offered the benefit of an education at the forefront of knowledge in their discipline
- continue our broad-based admissions policies, selecting on academic potential alone, and opening our doors to the most talented students, who share our passion for higher education
- continue to inspire those with the ability to study in higher education and at Leicester specifically to aim high and aspire
- provide targeted financial assistance and study support to minimise barriers to entry and progression
- recruit effectively and responsibly overseas
- prioritise as investments in the teaching and learning infrastructure those developments which will deliver the clearest benefits to students
- maintain a strong and collaborative relationship with student representatives in order to ensure that there is a clear understanding of needs and priorities
- have high aspirations for our graduates and proactively deliver employment related skills that will enable our graduates to meet these aspirations
- expand distance-learning provision through the incremental development of existing programmes where the market allows

The achievement of our vision for teaching will be delivered through:

- active programme development and recruiting activities, informed by high quality market intelligence
- paying constant attention to feedback on the various and changing needs of students
- excellent teaching in a fit-for-purpose environment
- responsive, pro-active and effective quality assurance mechanisms.

The achievement of our vision for teaching will be supported by:

- high quality library and IT systems
- excellent pastoral care, including careers advice
- systematic staff development
- good quality domestic and social provision for students
- the continuing development and improvement of the University's estate.

“The research that the academics do is quite often the module that they teach, so it has a direct impact on our lectures and seminars. Your course is shaped by their research which means you always know exactly what’s going on in your subject.”

AMBER CUTTILL
BA HISTORY AND ANCIENT HISTORY



The achievement of our vision for teaching will be monitored through the regular scrutiny of evidence relating to:

- student recruitment
- student satisfaction
- student performance
- institutional and subject-based performance measured against peer institutions
- the inclusivity of our academic culture

“Research-led teaching is very important to what we do here at Leicester. My research has fed directly into the modules that I teach at the Department of Criminology. Our students benefit as they don’t have to rely solely on secondary material for their knowledge.”

NEIL CHAKRABORTI,
LECTURER





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