Discovering People - an overview

‘Discovering People’ is the part of the strategic plan which ensures that the University of Leicester is a great place to work, a place in which people are encouraged and supported to flourish.

We have set out six commitments in the diagram that follows. Each and every one of these commitments plays an essential role in achieving our objectives. However, it is the synergy created by the six commitments together that will give the strategy its power and impact. Our team in Human Resources will model collaboration, which is vital to our University’s ongoing success, to ensure that this synergy is created and nurtured.

Behind this diagram we show further detail of how ‘Discovering People’ supports the achievement of our University’s overall strategic plan and how we will measure progress and success. We have given enough granularity to each of our six commitments so that the overall journey can be traced but we have left sufficient flexibility to ensure that we are able to take on board feedback (and we have already gathered and included feedback from many sources). We will also reflect the dependencies that may arise when ‘Discovering People’ is considered alongside the other discoveryenabling and discovery-led strategies.

We believe our ‘big ticket’ items for delivery this first year will be:

1. A leadership framework and leadership interventions that ensure that colleagues are able and willing to nurture people and can take forward our University’s strategic plan in an effective way
2. A process, agreed with colleagues, supported by on-going challenging and encouraging conversations which helps us all identify our strengths and future potential and encourages and rewards us to deploy these within the context of an overall performance framework that helps everyone meet the objectives of our strategic plan
3. Policies, processes and projects which help diversity flourish in all senses, including the way we lead and the way we work, and which embed diversity into our ‘business as usual’
4. The creation of a meaningful, co-ordinated and effective approach to health and wellbeing that works with colleagues and ensures that each one has an opportunity to excel.

In drafting ‘Discovering People’ we have drawn on the recommendations of Task and Finish Group 6 (‘Developing and Enhancing Careers at Leicester’), which Julie Coleman and I chaired. We have also carried out informal benchmarking with other universities, notably Sheffield and Lancaster and used experience from previous roles to determine the content. Finally, we have shared the strategy with all colleagues in Human Resources and taken on board their ideas, which they have provided with enthusiasm and commitment. Now that Discovering People has been agreed at Council, we will develop a resourcing plan to ensure we have the necessary expertise, capability and capacity to deliver it successfully.
Our Six Commitments

Attracting the Very Best People

Valuing Equality and Advancing Diversity

Nurturing and Developing People

Delivering our Health and Wellbeing Programme

Embracing Change, Innovation and Learning

Celebrating and Recognising Success

The University of Leicester – A great place to work
Discovering People

This is who we are and will be ..... 

‘......We will focus our efforts and energies on ensuring that Leicester becomes the place to work. We will create a culture in which our key assets-our people are trusted, valued and relied upon......’

(from our strategic plan)

Our celebratory dinner for academic promotees, 23rd November 2015

Discovering People

‘Discovering People’ is the part of the strategic plan that will achieve our aspiration of making the University of Leicester a truly great place to work.

‘Discovering People’ sets out the innovative ways in which we will work with staff to build on our strengths and our record of achievement in research discoveries, our flair for teaching innovation and our proven success in broadening access to higher education.

Our staff (both academic and professional services colleagues) and their collective contribution will be key to our shared success. Together we will create a great place to work, where we all thrive and excel, through listening to and engaging with staff and acting on their feedback and ideas. By valuing
and extending the diverse backgrounds and experience of our staff and by developing leaders and managers we will create an environment where students and staff flourish.

Our ambition to pioneer a distinctive elite of accessible institutions, open to all who have skills to contribute, will require us to attract the very best staff, to develop and nurture the talents and expertise of all our colleagues and to enhance the experience of working at the University of Leicester.

We want to build on our reputation as an open, accessible and friendly university, where people enjoy their work, and both staff and students benefit from our collegial and collaborative approach.

**Our Culture**

We will create a culture that recognises, rewards, celebrates success and acknowledges the close connection between individual achievements and our collective successes, where everyone is encouraged and developed through access to high quality development and the provision of good quality feedback, and where excellence in equality and diversity practice is as the heart of all we do. Positive action will be taken, where necessary, to improve the diversity of our University’s workforce. The culture created will value, trust and rely upon our staff to deliver an excellent student experience and impactful and innovative research and enterprise.

An excellent working environment where staff can flourish is critically dependant on an enabling culture. This culture will engender a sense of pride and belonging and we will share a common purpose across the University. It will incorporate our distinctive balance of friendliness and challenge.

Staff will be encouraged to be innovative and creative in the role they fulfil and we will develop a culture where staff feel able to share ideas, take risks and lead in making changes that improve the ways in which we operate that benefit students and staff.

We will develop a culture where staff feel supported and appropriately challenged and where the provision of feedback is central to all activities. We will develop a suite of activities and ways to recognise, reward and celebrate individual and team achievements.

We will focus on the importance of building relationships at all levels and will invest in developing our leaders and managers so that staff members experience a sense of fairness and support. The engagement and commitment of our leaders and managers is vital to the success of *Discovering People*. Our desire to build relationships will extend to the inclusion of our colleagues’ friends and families so that staff members feel truly valued for who they are.

**Our Values**

Our ten shared values are the ‘glue’ that bring the University together and give our different activities real coherence. Everything we do as part of *Discovering People* will be framed against the backdrop of these values.

Critically, we will support colleagues and teams to explore what the values mean to them both in terms of their work and also as they relate to the personal values which we all bring to our work. This sense of real and deep meaning is an essential catalyst in unleashing commitment and excellence in all our endeavours.
In addition, our values will drive the work we do to support PROUD; for example, mentoring schemes in our local community.

**Our Environment**

The physical, virtual and cultural environments all underpin the effective implementation of ‘Discovering People’.

We will develop environmentally-sensitive, digital systems that enable staff to spend the minimum amount of time engaged in business processes and we will invest in systems that facilitate easy access to and use of relevant information. Wherever possible, we will ask for information once.

These systems, mirroring what we do for our students, will also enable learning and development to be delivered in ways that meet the needs of a diverse staff body, who may wish to access support at times and in places that suit it best.

Finally, our systems will facilitate the collection and dissemination of learning so that we share best practice as our University develops.

We will create a positive environment where staff and students can communicate effectively and transparently with one another and where everyone is kept informed about the important things happening at our University.

We will focus on improving the working environment for staff and will provide social spaces where staff can enjoy time away from their office or work area to relax with colleagues. We will work in partnership with the student union to ensure we are providing a range of services on campus. We will also work with other local providers of higher education to ensure that our campus plays a key role in the creation of the ‘Leicester Educational Quarter’.

We will also create spaces for coaching and action learning set activities, where leadership skills can be developed and learning experiences shared in an environment conducive to such endeavours.

**Our Six Commitments**

**Attracting the Very Best People**

1. We will develop our reputation as a great place to work and we will attract people who are, or aspire to be, internationally renowned and recognised for their discovery-led teaching and research and enterprise.

2. We will attract the very best staff locally, nationally and internationally who will chose to work at our University and who are committed to providing an outstanding and unique student experience and to enhancing and developing our internationally renowned research and enterprise.
Valuing Equality and Advancing Diversity

1. We will focus on the importance of values and an environment of respect and dignity as part of a culture that not only recognises but proactively promotes equality and diversity in all areas.

2. We will capitalise on the rich internationality of our staff and students and will encourage all to seek out opportunities and interactions that will build their international experience, cultural awareness and global perspective. This will help to put us at the forefront of the effort to achieve gender equality in UK universities.

3. We will take effective action on all protected characteristics and raise our ambitions in relation to our involvement in HeForShe, Athena Swan accreditation, Stonewall Index and other charters of equality.

4. We will take positive action wherever necessary to improve the diversity of our colleague base.

Nurturing and Developing People

1. Our approach to career enhancement will build expertise and confidence and encourage our staff to be transformational in their work and ambitions.

2. We will nurture people wherever they are in their career stage, those working for the University now and those who have left, who may return and/or who are ambassadors for us. We will also delineate where our own people’s skills complement the talent in those external providers who work with us to achieve our strategic plan so that we are clear about what we want to develop ourselves and what we can draw upon from our partners.

3. We will ensure that all career pathways for academic and professional services colleagues are transparent, communicated clearly and supported with development interventions.

4. We will ensure that our approach to performance and potential, reward, recognition and promotion for academic and professional staff is transparent, understandable and fair and that it recognises excellence across an equally valued range of contributions that are aligned to our strategic plan.

5. All staff will benefit from improved learning and development, performance and development conversations, coaching and mentoring. We will support academic staff to have both the time and the skills they need for quality research and enterprise as well as excellent teaching and student support.

6. While offering an even better service to all staff, we will focus initially on those interventions that advance the strategic plan furthest and quickest such as the development of research leadership capability.

7. We will foster and enhance our culture of trust and respect and support staff to fulfil their potential and ambitions.

Delivering our Health and Wellbeing Programme

1. We will create a collaborative, progressive and healthy workplace in which staff members feel valued, energised and engaged at all levels.
2. Our priority will be to promote social, physical and mental wellbeing through a diverse range of accessible and current services that are responsive to the needs and wishes of our staff. This includes building relationships with colleagues’ friends and families and recognising people’s ‘whole self’ comes to work.

3. Recognising that ours is a University with challenges to meet and opportunities to explore, we will develop our leaders and managers to contribute to colleague wellbeing and to recognise the signs when wellbeing requires support, especially in times of change.

4. We will ensure that our Occupational Health Services are resourced sufficiently to support colleagues when they need it.

Embracing Change, Innovation and Learning

1. Our University provides many opportunities for interaction, conversation and consultation with staff and students; our approach to the challenges and opportunities of the future will be both decisive and collegial, balancing courage and good risk management.

2. We will value ambition, creativity and imagination and we trust ourselves to experiment and be bold. We will support each other by learning and challenging ourselves so we are constantly improving. We will capture learning wherever possible so we can use it again. We recognise that change, innovation and learning require time and energy.

3. We will build on our strong reputation as one, accessible and friendly university. We will continue to invest time and energy in developing relationships within our University and across our local, regional and international networks. Through these relationships we will collaborate and learn from leading organisations in HE and other sectors and we will embrace and embed change that is good for our students and our staff.

Celebrating and Recognising Success

1. We will ensure that excellence in all of its forms is recognised, rewarded and shared and we will identify, celebrate and promote what our university and our colleagues do well.

2. We will define and describe what excellent performance is and develop systems that recognise and reward achievements in a timely and open way that is meaningful to the person (or team) receiving the recognition.

Our Priorities (2015 – 2020)

Attracting the Very Best People will be delivered by a Recruitment Strategy that:

a) Builds on our employer brand by working in collaboration with our key internal and external partners, including our student recruitment team and local strategic partners across the city and county.

b) Creates innovative, imaginative and targeted campaigns, leveraging social media capabilities where appropriate, to attract staff from a wider range of backgrounds and from underrepresented groups.

c) Inspires our own staff to promote our University as a great place to work, acting as ambassadors and talent ‘scouts’ as they travel throughout the UK and globally.
d) Uses a wide range of techniques and tools (including direct sourcing wherever possible) to facilitate the recruitment of colleagues who espouse the values and behaviours of the University and who demonstrate an energy and appetite to continue to learn and contribute.

e) Articulates clearly the overall package and benefits that colleagues will enjoy, ensuring that these are competitive compared with those offered by other universities

f) Builds and manages a robust pipeline of suitable potential colleagues, passive and active, strengthening the availability of the best candidates at the right time.

g) Introduces a flexible welcome service for all new staff which provides induction programmes that present a stimulating introduction to the University, so that staff members feel able to make a meaningful contribution from an early stage, and start to create a sense of belonging and pride.

Valuing Equality and Advancing Diversity will be delivered by a Strategy that:-

a) Protects characteristics, examples of which are gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion and gender reassignment. Our role as one of only ten universities in the world to take the lead in the United Nations’ HeForShe campaign means that gender equality is an institutional priority.

b) Engages male as well as female students in active learning about equality and diversity in the formal and informal curricula, for example by using students’ minors in new subject areas such as ‘diversities and equalities’ and through extra-curricular opportunities such as volunteering, community engagement and the Leicester Awards.

c) Delivers significant progress on HeForShe, the Race Equality Charter, Stonewall and Athena SWAN related activity across the University and provides sufficient resource and readiness to reviews of those policies that have the potential to advance equality.

d) Invests in the development of the skills and potential of those colleagues who are under-represented currently in leadership roles and at senior levels.

e) Agrees and implements a set of organisation principles and model for workload allocation.

f) Delivers fully on a number of fronts including relevant mandatory equality training for all staff and students and the provision of reasonable adjustments proactively and efficiently for staff and students.

Nurturing and Developing People will be delivered by a comprehensive career enhancement and development framework that:-

a) Ensures that our leaders and managers at all levels of seniority and experience are supported to discover their strengths and to build on these. A range of leadership and management interventions will equip them with the necessary behaviours, skills and experiences to achieve their potential and to maximise their unique talents. We will provide development opportunities to all colleagues who aspire to be our future leaders and managers and who are committed to developing the potential of others.

b) Prioritises strategically important leadership skills, such as interventions to support the development of research and teaching leadership capability.
c) Clarifies which skills and attributes are the most important for our colleagues so that they can support the University’s strategic plan and deliver on these first (these might be, for example, creativity, decisiveness, self-confidence, openness to the ideas of others and willingness to delegate) while making clear that contributing to the success and development of others is the most significant attribute and commitment of leaders at the University of Leicester.

d) Articulates all career pathways clearly and supports them appropriately.

e) Helps colleagues with the management of change by providing appropriate interventions such as workshops and coaching.

f) Tailors development intervention methodology to the diverse learning needs of colleagues through such things as coaching and mentoring, action learning sets and on-line learning.

g) Supports leaders and managers to build inclusive teams that draw from the rich diversity of potential and expertise and foster individual and team excellence and actively develop a positive culture and environment, which still values challenge and ‘stretch’ on ideas.

h) Sets clear and realistic expectations for all members of staff through good quality and regular conversations, including annual performance development conversations, which encourage colleagues to develop both their existing skills and their potential, to address any issues that prevent them from maximising their performance and to recognise the implications of poor performance. This process will identify clearly the contributions colleagues make and how they and the organisation will work to continue to develop their expertise in teaching, research, enterprise, and professional services, enabling both successful achievement of goals and assisting in the fulfilment of career aspirations.

i) Supports all requirements for continuing professional development.

Delivering our Health and Wellbeing Programme will be achieved by a strategy that:

a) Ensures that working practices support, rather than detract from, our colleagues’ health and wellbeing.

b) Helps leaders and managers to understand the impact that their style might have on colleagues' wellbeing, to recognise potential symptoms and to have the confidence and skills to begin conversations with team members about health and wellbeing.

c) Recognises and responds to the different needs and circumstances of our staff through a range of activities and opportunities, including bespoke packages via external providers.

d) Develops lifestyle and programmes that promote a healthier workplace and reduce the toll and cost of ill-health (for example, the Active4Health, which is in pilot at present).

e) Promotes the health and wellbeing of colleagues through our ‘Discover’ website.

f) Develops the services of our Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Services to support staff and to work closely with managers.
Embracing Change, Innovation and Learning will be delivered by a strategy which:

a) Continues to develop meaningful engagement with staff, trade union colleagues and our students.

b) Evolves and improves our approach to staff engagement, implementation of change and communication processes.

c) Builds capacity and capability to innovate and implement change through thoughtful processes that involve staff from the outset.

d) Captures organisational learning and excellent ideas and disseminates them to colleagues.

e) Works with individuals and team to ensure that we achieve the appropriate balance between courage and risk and that we all take personal responsibility for change.

f) Nurtures networks and relationships that identify and import best practice ideas and innovation and create time and space for staff to discover and innovate locally.

g) Develops and implements digitally enabled HR information processes and systems that enables us to measure and evaluate.

Celebrating and Recognising Success will be delivered by a Recognition and Reward Strategy that:

a) Defines clearly an approach to reward that links achievement, contribution and progression.

b) Ensures that recognition is responsive to the needs of the individual (or team) deserving of the recognition; for example, by acknowledging an outstanding piece of work there and then in a way that is meaningful to the person or team concerned rather than through a centrally-managed process that takes months to reach a decision.

c) Develops an approach to academic promotions that links individual achievement (including sector awards) and successful contribution to career progression and offers timely and flexible solutions to reward excellence and outstanding contributions.

d) Encourages colleagues for whom promotion is not immediately available by showing an appreciation of the value of their contribution and helping them to find a good way forward and to plan progression over the longer term.

e) Delivers cohesive series of events that showcase and celebrate individual, team and organisational success, the areas where the biggest progress has been made and exceptional achievements, linked to our values.

f) Builds a suite of flexible benefits and opportunities to suit the diverse needs of our staff and empowers leaders to use these to reward and encourage colleagues.

Measures of Success

Success will be measured through a small number of qualitative and quantitative metrics which cut across our six commitments to ensure that impact benefits fully from team synergies.

We have listed below the metrics that we believe will give us the best indication of progress and success. We believe it is vital to engage with stakeholders to get feedback on these metrics. Then, post
discussions with colleagues and after considering interdependencies with other parts of the strategic plan, we will finalise the metrics and quantify them clearly.
<table>
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<th>KPI</th>
<th>Rationale/purpose</th>
<th>Benchmarking/monitoring</th>
<th>Draft Target 2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Improvement in the diversity profile of staff members in terms of numbers and advancement</td>
<td>To ensure that we embrace and nurture talented people wherever they are to be found. To make ourselves a truly global university. To reflect the diversity of the city which is our home and be seen as a local employer of choice.</td>
<td>- Annual monitoring of diversity statistics, including numbers of senior staff appointed by promotion and by external recruitment - Number of appointments from overseas universities - Annual benchmarking with other universities - Progress on accreditation and Charters such as Athena Swan - Number of fulfilled commitments to HeForShe - Number of staff who comment in the staff survey that the University is a fair place to work</td>
<td>30% of Professors and 50% of Professional Services grade 10 colleagues are women. 20% of professional services colleagues at grade 9 and below are from a BAME background, reflecting the diversity of people in our geography. 15% of academic colleagues are from a BAME background. 50% reduction in the Professorial gender pay gap (which stands currently at 8.8%)*</td>
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<td>2. Attraction and retention of valued colleagues</td>
<td>To ensure that we maximise our chances of obtaining the best possible recruits to our University. To minimise the cash and time cost of ‘employee churn’. To make our colleague attraction programmes a key means of marketing our University as well as recruiting people in the most efficient way.</td>
<td>- Number of successful appointments from the top 100 universities in the UK and overseas - Turnover rates - Analysis of comments from exit interviews</td>
<td>Turnover rates are stabilised at c. 8%* 75% of external recruits stay more than two years.* 20% uptake of exit interviews completed by leavers.</td>
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| 3. Nurturing and developing people | To ensure that colleagues bring the best of their talents to their work.  
To give clarity on the standards of performance expected by our University and support on how these standards can be met. | -The number of performance and development discussions taking place  
-Consistency in the number and quality of performance development discussions across the University  
-Feedback on the quality of these discussions  
-Annual analysis of number of first-time promotions for academic staff -Percentage of staff members who  
Rise in success rate of first-time academic promotions:*  
To Chair – 80%  
To Reader - 95%  
To Senior lecturer-95%.  
100% of all colleagues have had a performance and development discussion. |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | To ensure that, through on-going conversations, leaders and managers encourage and develop the performance of their team members.  
To ensure that we don’t lose and waste talented people by not offering opportunities for its development. | comment in the staff survey that the University has supported the development of their talent  
90% of colleagues are satisfied with the performance and development discussion they had and valued the experience (conducted on a sample basis and extrapolated). |  |
| 4. Developing capable and confident leaders | To ensure that the University has a cadre of leaders who are willing, skilled and confident to lead and, when appropriate, to manage.  
To ensure that the complexity of activity in the University is matched by the diversity of its leadership capability there is no one way to lead in such an environment and there are available many different leadership talents. | -Number of leadership interventions and of leaders/potential taking up the opportunities  
-The quality of the feedback from these interventions  
-Review of the effectiveness of leadership development by following it through to impact as shown by annual performance and development conversations and by such things as 360 degree feedback  
-Percentage of staff members who comment in the staff survey that they have been led well and effectively  
-Particular feedback measures set for business-critical interventions in such areas as research leadership  
Targets will be set after a review of the results of the 2016 staff survey in summer 2016 -the areas to focus on will be (i) a rise in leadership capability and effectiveness (the exact extent to be determined) and (ii) a reduction in staff grievances. |  |
5. Creating a working environment that safeguards the health and wellbeing of our staff.

| To ensure that we look after our most valuable asset—our people—and that we provide an environment that helps people give of their best. | Number of referrals to Occupational Health and Employee Assistance  
- Trends in reasons for such referrals and how long it takes to action appropriately  
- Participation rates in programmes and activities promoted through such things as the ‘Discover’ website  
- Number of staff who comment in the staff survey that the University is interested in their wellbeing | 20% reduction in sickness absence levels.*  
30% of colleagues participate in wellbeing activities e.g. membership of the gym or the choir. |

| To ensure that colleagues feel that the University values their contribution both to their own role and also to ideas that advance | Completion rates of staff surveys -  
Success rates in implementation of action plans arising from staff surveys  
- The frequency with which colleagues’ ideas are recognised | 60% of colleagues respond to the staff survey.  
90% of colleagues who report through the staff survey that they feel listened to.  
A target will be set for rise in completion rates of action plans arising from staff surveys after the first survey results are reviewed in summer 2016. |

6. Colleague engagement

| To support colleagues in times of change so that they continue to feel valued and comfortable to give of their best in potentially demanding and unsettling circumstances.  
To work with other stakeholders such as the student union and Trade Unions to capture all ideas and to find productive outcomes wherever possible. | and rewarded  
- Successful outcomes from local change programmes  
- Details of how staff members feel before, during and after change programmes  
- The quality of feedback from key stakeholders such as the student union and the Trade Unions | they feel listened to.  
A target will be set for rise in completion rates of action plans arising from staff surveys after the first survey results are reviewed in summer 2016. |

* Baseline figure is 1st January 2016 and end date is 31st December 2020

Linkage to Other Parts of the Strategic Plan

‘Discovering People’ is closely dependent on other parts of the strategic plan. We will ensure that we revise this document once these interdependencies are identified. At present we believe that the other relevant strategies include:

- Physical Environment Strategy, in terms of space for conversations, sharing of learning, coaching, mentoring and action learning sets.
• Digital Strategy, in terms of the platform for on-line learning and for collecting and disseminating organisational learning.
• Research strategy, in terms of the priorities for research leadership capability.
• Teaching and learning strategy, in terms of the priorities for teaching leadership capability.
• Finance strategy, in terms of ensuring we can provide the necessary interventions for such things as leadership development.
• Enterprise strategy, in terms of enabling us to contribute to the ‘Leicester Educational Quarter’ and to broaden our reach for attracting talented colleagues, especially in the city of Leicester.
• International strategy, in terms of us building relationships with future employees.
• Corporate Social Responsibility, in terms of helping us to find development opportunities for our staff and to motivate and fulfil them through engagement with such activity.