

While the University has performed extremely well across a range of external benchmarks and 'league tables', we continue to focus on our mission to deliver the highest quality professional education and applied research to our diverse population of students and customers and to help to meet the needs of our local employers and the economy. This leads us to conclude that our ambition to consistently be one of the best modern universities in the UK remains entirely valid for us. This ambition recognises that the best modern university in the UK will often outperform others within the university sector. It also recognises that, although essentially a university with a strong regional focus, Robert Gordon University plays an important role in the international arena through its significant levels of recruitment of international students, its delivery to corporate customers overseas and its range of international partnerships established for education and research purposes.

The environment in which higher education institutions have to operate will continue to be extremely challenging over the coming years and the University will have to take steps to adapt and respond to these pressures in order that it can continue to deliver strongly with the flexibility and responsiveness which will be necessary in this changing environment. This will continue to demand significant changes and creativeness from all of us as we find new ways of achieving our objectives. I believe the University is well placed to do this and will go from strength to strength over the coming years as challenges are met and opportunities seized.

R. Michl P.H.

Professor Mike Pittilo
Principal and Vice-Chancellor



CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

We have assessed the factors which will be critical to our success as follows:

- Sustain our Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and international student numbers in a more challenging, competitive environment
- Generate a major revenue stream from business interaction activities for the value that we add
- A relentless focus on quality which will help to maintain and develop our reputation – an excellent student experience from first point of contact through every interface we have with students
- A focused research portfolio which underpins teaching, is of international standing and is financially sustainable
- A work force which is committed, resourceful and effective
- Facilities and resources which are fit for purpose and affordable
- Continued financial health.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

In order to monitor progress at Board of Governors' level a set of six key high-level performance indicators (KPI) has been agreed. These monitor the impact of our success or otherwise in relation to our key strategic objectives and against the critical success factors identified above.

KPI 1:	Level of total SFC teaching funding and proportion of total SFC teaching allocation compared with previous years
KPI 2:	Level and geographical sources of income from international students compared with previous years
KPI 3:	Net financial contribution from business interaction over time
KPI 4:	Level of research grant and contract income and % full economic cost recovery over time
KPI 5:	Net surplus, current ratio and borrowing over time
KPI 6:	Consistent high performance within the modern university sector in national league tables.

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**ROBERT GORDON
UNIVERSITY • ABERDEEN**

A CLEAR FUTURE



Our Strategy
2009 – A Refresh

A CLEAR FUTURE 2009 REFRESH

The Best Modern University in the UK



In 2007, after extensive consultation and debate across the institution and with external stakeholders, the University launched its updated strategy, A Clear Future. At a strategy review seminar in early 2009, the Executive Group and Deans undertook a thorough review of progress with the strategy, the changing external environment and the ongoing relevance of the strategic priorities set out in A Clear Future. The conclusions of that review were endorsed by the Board of Governors in March 2009.

In essence, it was agreed that, although there had been good progress in a number of key areas, there still remained work to do on most fronts. The timescales for achievement of some of the objectives would be subject to review as a result of the significant upheaval in the global and UK economies and this would be reflected through the annual University Implementation Plan. However, the six strategic priorities for the University for the foreseeable future remained unchanged with one notable exception. The University had performed particularly well in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise and it was felt appropriate to revise the objective in relation to research and knowledge exchange activities to better reflect our current ambitions and intent arising from this improvement in our performance and boost in our ratings, with a view to putting this onto a sustainable footing. The six key strategic objectives for the University for the foreseeable future, including a refreshed and more ambitious objective for research and knowledge exchange, are set out in the following pages.

KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



1. STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Enrich the all-round experience of our students throughout their engagement with the University

We will:

- Involve students in the design and review of services and provision to ensure they continue to make a positive contribution to the student experience
- Enhance access to high quality information, advice and support in relation to both academic and personal matters enabling students to reach informed decisions
- Develop those administrative systems and procedures which impact on students to ensure they consistently provide a positive and professional experience
- Promote and support the cultural experience of our students and their engagement in sporting, artistic and other social activities
- Challenge every area of the University to consider how it can enhance its impact on the student experience
- Engage positively with our alumni, ensuring their CPD and life-long learning needs continue to be met and that the University benefits, in turn, from the wealth of their experience, talent and influence.

2. TEACHING & LEARNING

Enhance the quality and relevance of our taught provision

We will:

- Monitor and review the scope of our portfolio of provision to ensure that it is relevant and attractive to students, employers and other relevant stakeholders, reflecting changing needs and opportunities
- Ensure the value and quality of our courses through effective implementation of our quality assurance and enhancement processes
- Ensure that our staff engage in appropriate scholarship and professional development
- Encourage and support students to engage effectively with their studies and with the University in general. We expect our students to be active partners in the learning process
- Continue to invest in teaching, accommodation and social facilities and resources to create a physical environment which is modern, stimulating and encourages development and learning.

3. ACCESS FOR ALL

Increase the diversification of our student population

We will:

- Diversify our student intakes to improve the balance of participation across all Schools in terms of level of study, country of origin and national reach. Strengthen and further develop our partnerships with selected further education colleges as a key focus of our widening participation agenda
- Promote and develop our outreach and support arrangements to extend our participation from under-represented groups and rural communities
- Offer more structured part-time learning opportunities which support our diversification and growth objectives
- Develop our distance learning provision to meet the needs of individuals and their employers in accessing our services in ways which are both effective and efficient. Recognise the implications for all our activities of an increasingly diverse student population and put in place arrangements to ensure that we respond to the needs of students and capitalise on the opportunities that such diversity brings.

4. LEARNING THROUGH LIFE

Expand our provision of corporate programmes and life-long learning opportunities

We will:

- Grow our provision of corporate programmes significantly in a way which is sustainable over the longer term
- Develop an approach for corporate customers that is bespoke, commercially-focused and meets expectations, working in partnership with them to ensure that their education and training needs are met at every level
- Continue to develop our CPD provision, in terms of content and delivery methods, in response to the needs of our markets
- Distinguish ourselves in the market by the quality of our service, the relevance of our programmes and our flexibility in responding to individual corporate requirements.

5. RESEARCH AND COMMERCIALISATION

Grow our internationally excellent research and knowledge exchange activities and reputation

We will:

- Focus the investment of our resources on areas of applied research where we can expect to maintain and grow national and international recognition for quality
- Prioritise applied research and build multidisciplinary teams with a thematic rather than a discipline focus
- Actively engage with business and the professions to seek opportunities to engage in knowledge exchange and pursue the protection and commercialisation of research which has potential to significantly support economic development
- Develop our consultancy provision, making our wider expertise more readily available to our customers in business and the professions.

6. A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Secure our economic and environmental sustainability

We will:

- Implement arrangements for sustainable income generation and cost containment
- Invest on the basis of well-founded appraisals and financial projections to ensure that we do not over-commit resources
- Ensure the experience of current students and customers is considered equally with those of the future in allocating resources and committing to developments
- Contribute to environmental sustainability, both through our planned capital investments and through our ongoing management of facilities and resources. We aim to take a lead in these matters.