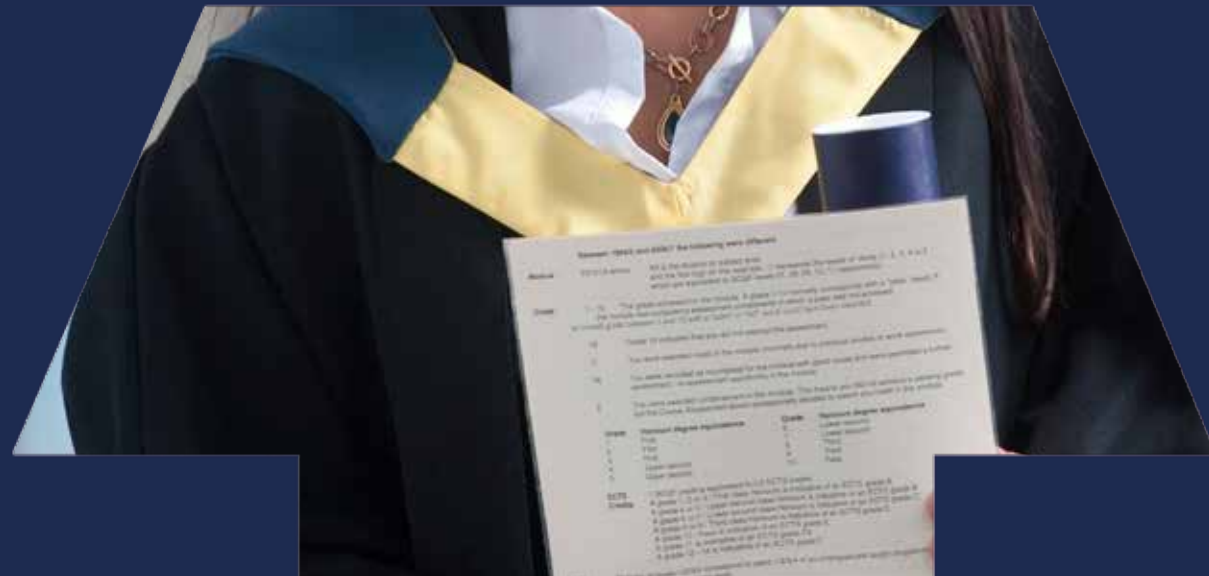
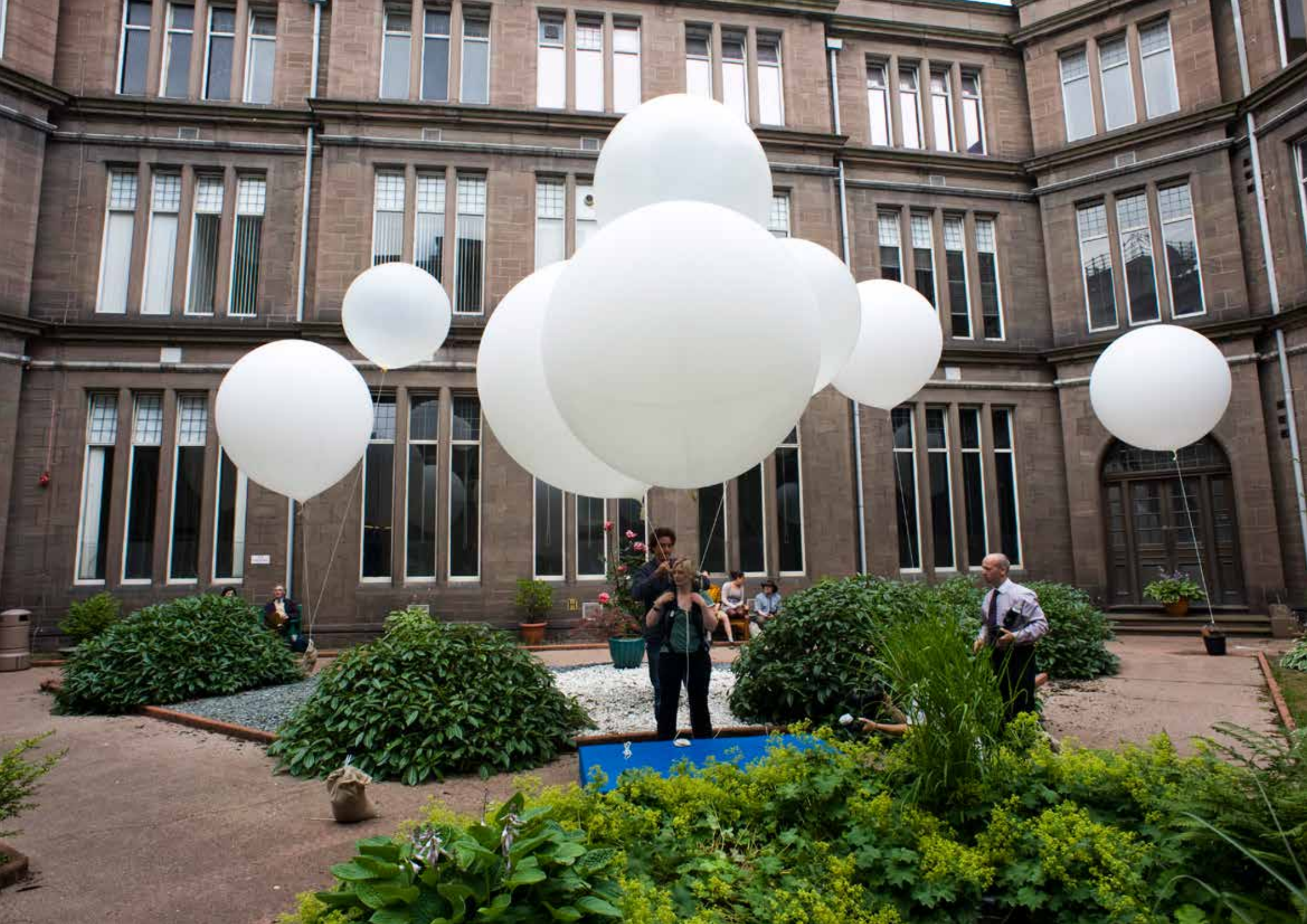




STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2020

abertay.ac.uk





INTRODUCTION



Abertay's new Strategic Plan has been written for the Abertay community – for those who belong to it now, and for those who might join us in the future. Of course, it is also intended for friends of the University, for prospective collaborators, and for others who have an interest in what we do. It describes what sort of university we are, and will guide us as we develop as an institution.

The plan begins with a statement of our Purpose – our own understanding of what we are about as a university. As you will see, this amounts to a commitment to provide transformational opportunities, to helping all in the Abertay community – students, staff and graduates – to achieve their potential, and to have a positive impact on the world around us. We then go on to identify a set of Principles, consistent with the Purpose, that will guide our work over the next five years and beyond. From the Principles flow, in turn, aims and ways of measuring progress towards achieving those aims.

This Strategic Plan will guide the action we take over the next five years. It will also, by implication, help us to determine what we choose not to do; good strategy, after all, makes some choices less natural, as well as encouraging others. We also hope that our Purpose and the Principles, rooted as they are in our understanding of ourselves as a community, will guide the development of the University in the longer term, beyond 2020.

Of course, as our plan looks forward, it also builds on the past. Our values as an institution, which were so important in helping us to articulate our Purpose, reflect our focus on student learning, an emphasis on preparing students for

the world of work, and a strong sense of social mission. We inherit all these from the foundation of our predecessor institution, the Dundee Technical Institute, in 1888. We build on excellence in a range of academic disciplines, as well as in the provision of support services, and on a history of innovation throughout our history – most prominently, of course, being the first university anywhere to introduce Computer Games as an academic discipline.

This Strategic Plan is necessarily a reference work, to be pulled out and consulted as we work through the next five years and beyond. But it is also intended to tell a story, connecting the Purpose, Principles and Aims with the life of the University, and I hope you will find it worthwhile to read it in that way.

Finally, I would like to make a few comments on how the Strategic Plan was developed. This was a work of partnership, involving students, colleagues, members of Senate and the University Court, our governing body. Following a scenario planning exercise in early 2014, we engaged with various groups over the course of the year, establishing a clear picture of what is important to the Abertay community as we look to the future. The development of the Strategic Plan was also informed by discussions around key supporting strategies, in Teaching and Learning Enhancement, Research and Knowledge Exchange, Estates, and Internationalisation.

It has been a privilege for me, as Principal, to work with the Abertay community on developing the Strategic Plan 2015–2020, and I look forward to leading the University in its implementation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nigel Seaton'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Principal and Vice-Chancellor
February 2015

OUR PURPOSE

- To offer transformational opportunities to everyone who has the ability to benefit from Abertay's approach to university education.
- To inspire and enable our students, staff and graduates to achieve their full potential.
- To use our knowledge and expertise to have a positive impact on the world around us.

Sport Quotes Poster Series

We will do this by

- **Choosing our own path**, being different if it means we can serve our students, staff, partners, and wider community better.
- Developing new ways to open up study at Abertay by providing **a range of routes to an Abertay degree**.
- Providing a **broad, flexible, responsive and relevant curriculum** to prepare students with the knowledge and skills to be successful in the world beyond Abertay.
- **Working in partnership** with our students, encouraging greater involvement in shaping our policies and practice
- Aligning our teaching, research, innovation and knowledge exchange activity to **local and national priorities**.
- Encouraging our staff to use their **knowledge and expertise** to solve real-world problems.
- Investing in high quality infrastructure to provide an environment which will **support and inspire our students and staff**.
- Developing and sustaining **an inclusive and supportive culture**, welcoming and retaining students and staff from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- Giving our students **a more international experience** by increasing the number of international students at Abertay and providing more opportunities for exchanges.
- Being **rooted in our community** and maintaining close links with key partners in Dundee and beyond.



OUR APPROACH

In everything we do, we will strive to:

- Ensure excellence
- Be innovative
- Be professional
- Be fair, inclusive and transparent
- Provide the best possible student experience
- Demonstrate the highest standards of leadership and governance
- Provide appropriate and high quality facilities



OUR PRINCIPLES

Choosing our own path

- Being proud of and confident in the way we do things at Abertay and the choices we make.
- Celebrating the fact that we are a small, successful university making a significant contribution, in our own way, to the economic and social well-being of our local area and the rest of Scotland.
- Providing our students with the knowledge, skills and confidence they require to succeed on their chosen paths.

Recognising and developing potential

- Offering opportunities to those who may not find them elsewhere by providing a range of routes to an Abertay degree.
- Supporting our students and graduates to realise their full potential.
- Attracting and developing the best staff, recognising and rewarding them for the contribution they make to our success.

Expanding horizons

- Raising the aspirations of potential students in the communities we serve.
- Enriching the lives of students and staff by offering opportunities for new experiences (such as exchanges) nationally and internationally and a curriculum which fosters curiosity and innovation.





- Developing a creative and diverse culture at Abertay by welcoming students and staff from all over the world.
- Ensuring our graduates have the relevant knowledge and skills to be ready for the world of work.
- Encouraging and supporting entrepreneurial activity by our staff and students.

Working in partnership

- Building mutually beneficial partnerships locally, nationally and internationally to support and help to deliver on our strategic objectives.
- Being known for our 'can do' attitude.
- Actively engaging in the local community.

Making our knowledge accessible

- Using and applying our knowledge and expertise to make a positive impact on the world around us.
- Developing new ways to open up study at Abertay to anyone who can benefit from it.

CHOOSING OUR OWN PATH

- Inspiring our staff, students and graduates to be proud to be part of the Abertay community. We will continue to be inclusive, supportive and rooted in the community.
- Providing an environment that supports and encourages our staff to excel at what they do.
- Offering a high quality and distinctive experience for students, providing a broad, flexible, responsive and relevant curriculum which enables choice and offers the opportunity for students to personalise their degree, alongside high quality student support tailored to individual needs.
- Providing a university experience that makes our graduates 'ready for work'.
- Being confident about what we do, taking managed risks in order to ensure future successes.





Strategic aims

- Provide and continually refresh a relevant, attractive and high quality portfolio of programmes, all of which are informed by employer input.
- Achieve and maintain national prominence for our expertise in computer games, mental health nursing, sport, food innovation and the environment.
- Promote an interdisciplinary approach to research which aligns with local and national priorities, focussing on our key research themes of creative industries, environment, security and society.
- Foster the Abertay Attributes in our students and establish life-long relationships with our graduates.
- Promote a culture of continuous improvement across all areas of the University, ensuring we provide the highest standards of teaching, student support, and customer service and improving efficiency and sustainability in the way we do things.
- Demonstrate our success through improved communication.
- Enhance our standing in external league tables.
- Invest in our infrastructure ensuring high quality facilities for staff and students, in line with our Estates strategy.
- Be recognised in Scotland for our distinctive, interdisciplinary and flexible approach.

By 2020 we will

- Implement the outcomes of our full-scale review of our portfolio, developing a set of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes which are attractive, relevant and viable.
- Embed the Abertay Attributes in our curriculum.
- Embed the principles of efficiency and effectiveness across the University.
- Implement a financial strategy to ensure future sustainability.
- Develop and implement a high-level people and organisational development plan.
- Improve our existing estate in line with our estates strategy.
- Continue to invest in our IT infrastructure to provide modern and leading edge systems which support our new ways of working.
- Show improvement in our benchmarking against comparable modern universities and, consequently, improvement in our league table position.

KPIs

- % students satisfied with the overall quality of their course.
- % of staff who say the University is a good place to work.
- Annual operating surplus as % of total income.
- League table position.

RECOGNISING AND DEVELOPING POTENTIAL

- Offering opportunities to those who might not find them elsewhere, by providing a range of routes to an Abertay degree.
- Engaging with schools and the local community to raise aspirations.
- Supporting our students and graduates to realise their full potential.
- Attracting and developing the best staff, recognising and rewarding them for the contribution they make to our success.
- Valuing diversity and mainstreaming equality and diversity across all of our activities.



Strategic aims

- Provide a range of entry routes to Abertay and work closely with partners in education to ensure smooth transitions to Abertay.
- Ensure that our recruitment, admissions and assessment policies recognise potential and result in a diverse student population.
- Increase the proportion of students who successfully complete a degree.
- Recognise and support excellence in teaching and embed a holistic, staff centred approach to learning and teaching CPD.
- Nurture and value research active staff, particularly early career researchers, through the activities of the Graduate School.

By 2020 we will

- Provide effective and inclusive pre-study support for all students.
- Streamline and improve our systems for monitoring student progress.
- Increase the proportion of students who successfully complete an honours degree.
- Continue to ensure that at least 25% of our undergraduate entrants articulate from college to levels 2 or 3 of an Abertay degree.
- Continue to deliver against the outcomes in our Equality Action plan.
- Achieve Athena SWAN silver award for the University by 2018.
- Ensure all staff involved in teaching and supporting learning achieve appropriate national professional recognition.

KPIs

- % of Scottish-domiciled entrants from the 20% and 40% most deprived postcodes.
- % of Scottish-domiciled entrants articulating with advanced standing.
- % of undergraduate entrants still in higher education after one year.
- % of undergraduate students projected to receive a degree.



EXPANDING HORIZONS

- Raising the aspirations of potential students in the communities we serve.
- Enriching the lives of students and staff by offering opportunities for new experiences (such as exchanges) nationally and internationally and a curriculum which allows them to explore new and innovative approaches.
- Developing a creative and diverse culture at Abertay by welcoming students and staff from all over the world.
- Actively engaging with our local community.
- Ensuring our graduates have the relevant knowledge and skills to be ready for the world of work.



Strategic aims

- Encourage student and staff mobility, both within the UK and internationally.
- Develop international links and partnerships in line with our internationalisation strategy.
- Expand the range of research and knowledge exchange collaborations in which we actively participate.
- Encourage more of our graduates to continue to postgraduate study.
- Providing opportunities for work placements and experience.
- Support and encourage students to undertake entrepreneurial and other extra-curricular activities.

By 2020 we will

- Offer every student the opportunity to undertake work experience as part of their degree programme.
- At least double the number of taught postgraduate students studying at Abertay.
- Double the number of international undergraduate students studying at Abertay.
- Increase the number of staff participating in Erasmus or similar exchanges.
- Implement a student enterprise support framework.
- Expand our active international partnerships.

KPIs

- % of graduates in employment or further study.
- % of graduates in graduate-level employment.
- Number of students taking up work experience opportunities.
- International students as % of student population.
- Postgraduate taught students as % of student population.



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

- Building mutually beneficial partnerships locally, nationally and internationally to support and help to deliver on our strategic objectives.
- Being known for our 'can do' attitude.
- Sustaining a strong partnership with our Students' Association and students.

Strategic aims

- Work closely with our partners in the education sector to ensure smooth transitions to Abertay.
- Develop strong partnerships with relevant partners in business and the professions, ensuring that our curriculum is relevant, informed by best practice and creates graduates who are 'ready for work' and able to succeed.



- Encourage joint appointments and secondments with key partners where appropriate.
- Encourage greater involvement of students in shaping our policies and practice.
- Improve co-ordination of activity across the University to ensure that we are working together for maximum impact.
- Play an active role in the future development of Dundee, contributing to the work of the Dundee Partnership.

By 2020 we will

- Strengthen our relationship with college partners, ensuring curriculum alignment and greater co-ordination of activities.
- Operate a 'one stop shop' approach for our business partners.
- Improve the effectiveness of our internal communication.
- Increase alumni engagement, through a range of initiatives, including a mentoring programme.
- Play a key role in delivering the Dundee Cultural Strategy and contribute to UNESCO City of Design activities.

KPIs

- Retention/completion rate for entrants articulating to Abertay at stages 2 and 3.
- Number of alumni involved in mentoring programme.
- Staff survey: % of staff who think communication in the University is effective.





MAKING OUR KNOWLEDGE ACCESSIBLE

- Using and applying our knowledge and expertise to make a positive impact on the world around us.
- Developing new ways to open up study at Abertay.

Strategic aims

- Provide a range of routes into Abertay and to achieving an Abertay degree.
- Provide tailored support to business and public sector clients, using our expertise to help them to develop innovative and practical solutions.
- Develop innovative ways of delivering our programmes and ensure campus-based programmes are supported by an appropriate IT infrastructure.
- Align our research innovation and knowledge exchange strategy and activity with national and local priorities.

By 2020 we will

- Offer an accelerated route on at least 10 of our programmes.
- Work with colleges to ensure that at least 25% of our undergraduate entrants join Abertay at years 2 or 3 of their degrees.
- Implement a business development strategy, including new and innovative consultancy services, to increase our income from knowledge exchange activity by 10% by 2020.
- Increase our income from research grant and contract income by 10% by 2020.
- Embed the Dundee Academy of Sport as a key part of the University's activities.
- Launch our IP self-audit and IP Manifest Toolsets in partnership with the UK Intellectual Property Office, providing free online IP housekeeping audits and a novel IP house checklist tool for digital content SMEs.

KPIs

- % Scottish-domiciled entrants articulating with advanced standing.
- Total research grant and contract income.
- Total income from knowledge exchange activity.
- Number of citations.





ABERTAY ATTRIBUTES

Intellectual

Abertay will foster individuals to:

- Master their subject, understand how it is evolving and how it interacts with other subjects;
- Know how knowledge is generated, processed and disseminated, and how problems are defined and solved;
- Be able to critically evaluate information, and tackle uncertainty and information gaps with confidence and self-awareness.

Professional

Abertay will foster individuals to:

- Be decision-makers and problem-solvers, tackling complex issues using creativity and considered judgement;
- Be equipped and motivated to continue learning and professional development throughout their careers;
- Be able to work both independently and collectively, understanding the values and responsibilities of playing a leadership and a team-member role as required.

Personal

Abertay will foster individuals to:

- Be determined, ambitious, articulate and adaptable;
- Be responsive and responsible in personal, cultural and social contexts;
- Understand and embody self-awareness, honesty and integrity in their professional and personal lives.

Active citizen

Abertay will foster individuals to:

- Deploy their skills and learning to make a real contribution to society locally, nationally and internationally;
- Be inclusive, globally conscientious, socially respectful, and self-reflective;
- Maintain and continuously develop awareness of their civic, ethical and environmental responsibilities.





Abertay firsts

World's first degree in computer games technology, and in ethical hacking.

Scotland's first degree in computer arts.

Professionally relevant

Industry and the professions accredit and help design our courses, and create work placement opportunities, business game challenges and other career-relevant interactions.

100+ years of education

Since 1888 we have been involved in educating people with the focus on the world of work and having an impact on both the local and global economy.

Employee prospects

Our alumni work for Apple, Google, BBC, Microsoft, Pixar, Rockstar Games, IBM, Coca Cola, Adidas, Nestle, Pay Pal, Nissan, PwC, Sky, NCR, GSK, BP, Shell, Chevron, TOTAL, SONY and many other companies.

Student focused

Abertay is the first in Scotland to offer fast-track options across all its main subject areas, allowing a full four year honours degree to be completed in three years, giving students the opportunity to enter the jobs market faster and with less student debt.

International experience

More than 80 countries are represented among our students and staff, creating a rich and diverse academic community and a growing range of global links.

150

links all over the world



64%

Employers think international experience is important for recruitment

64%

Employers say graduates with an international background are given greater professional responsibility



Employers look for transferable skills developed during study abroad or work abroad time

92%





Abertay University®

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