LIVERPOOL 2031: OUR STRATEGIC AMBITION

Our Vision

Through the framework, we are seeking to realise our Vision:

The University of Liverpool will be recognised for globally-leading research and education, the quality and scale of its partnerships, and its positive impact on people, our place and the planet. Driven by our values and diverse community of colleagues, students and alumni, we will make ground-breaking discoveries that shape the future, empower individuals to become changemakers, and inspire students to fulfil their academic and personal ambitions.

Our strategic pillars and themes

The strategic framework features four pillars, representing our main areas of strategic focus. The pillars are:

Research and impact

Education and experience

Global experience

Place and Innovation

There are also two overarching themes, essential to each pillar and to achieving the overall vision:

People and Culture

Sustainability

GROUND-BREAKING, WORLD-SHAPING

Our vision: To deliver ground-breaking research that changes our world for the better.

Our Objectives:

Improving our performance (as measured by % 4* quality in REF)

i.   **Growing research income**
ii. **Increasing the quality and diversity of research outputs**
iii. **Capacity building in areas of thematic research strength**
iv. **Enhancing our research environment & infrastructure**
v.   **Building on our impact strengths to enhance interdisciplinarity**

Our Plan:

- **Growing research income**
  - Utilise expertise from recent strategic wins to maintain our income growth trajectory.
  - Leverage increased availability of pump priming.
  - Work with departments and research teams to iterate strategies to meet CREATE and Liverpool 31 ambitions.
  - Develop a scaffolded approach by career stage to funding support.
  - Provide training to grow the quality and size of the peer review college.
  - Maintain and grow strategic funder relationships (Arts & Humanities Research Council, Leverhulme, Wellcome & Economic and Social Research Council).

- **Increasing the quality and diversity of research outputs**
  - Use Unit of Assessment (UoA) and sector examples to develop best practice guides e.g. for pre-publication interventions, non-standard outputs, calibration particularly at the 3*/4* boundary.

- Develop a community of practice with Libraries, Museums & Galleries, the Research Partnerships and Innovation Directorate and Units to support reading panels, training and REF preparations.
- Embed EDI into governance and reporting.
- Contribute to open research events e.g. future of the monograph symposium.

- **Capacity building in areas of thematic strength**
  - Launch the Digital Media and Society Institute (DMSI) and the Heritage Institute.
  - Continue to work on digital campaigns to raise the profile of our research.
  - Identify civic, national and international collaborative opportunities with external partners and interdisciplinary opportunities internally e.g. Digital Symposium.
  - Provide for networking e.g. NHS Provocations series, Defence Science Technology Laboratory showcase.

- **Enhancing our Research Environment & Infrastructure**
  - Enhance leadership and team support in these areas.
  - Embed the [Faculty PGR Strategy](#).
  - Retain and attract high quality postgraduate researchers, ensuring they are recruited from diverse backgrounds and provided with the support and resources they need to succeed as researchers.
  - Work closely with the Academy and signpost our researchers to leadership and training programmes, with a particular focus on encouraging engagement from under-represented groups.
  - Enhance capture of activities and improve REF preparations by introducing an annual environment survey.
  - Embed ethics and integrity across all processes e.g. peer-review
  - Reinvigorate the Early Career Researcher network.
  - Identify and support business cases for research capital investment proposals e.g. digital humanities.

- **Build on our impact strengths to enhance interdisciplinarity**
  - Identify and support embryonic impact opportunities e.g. cyber security.
  - Target funding support on areas of growth, utilising strategic funding such as the Impact Acceleration Account, Partnership Innovation Fund and Faculty Flexible Funding.
  - Provide fora for cross-faculty and external impact collaborations.
  - Work with Research & Impact Support centrally to develop optimal systems to track and capture impact evidence.

Our Outputs:

- **Increased % of colleagues who are PI/Co-I on a grant, incorporating equality impact assessments into policy design for initiatives in this area.**
- **A suite of career level and funder specific support programmes** delivered increasing confidence to apply.
- **Institutional income ambitions met.**
- **Increase % 4* Environment** across all submitting units for 2029. Aiming for 100% 3* and 4* profiles (removing 2* and zero 4* profiles).
- **Increased % 4* outputs** across all submitting units for 2029 and diversification of the Outputs pool.
- **Maintain and build on 4*% impact** across Units of Assessment and create dynamic impact narratives.
- **Institute a Faculty postgraduate research strategy** that is responsive to the social, economic, technological and policy contexts of the postgraduate research environment.
- **Viewed as the 'go-to' partner in the North-West for identified research** strengths, especially by policy makers.
- **Growth in international research networks** as reflected in improved QS rankings.
- **Be seen as offering an environment that attracts and retains a diverse range of talent,** as measured by meeting the action plans for external charter mark such as Athena Swan, REC, the Concordat to support the development of researchers and HR Excellence.
- **Increase commercial engagement** with our equipment and Continuing Professional Development offer.

ENRICHING MINDS, TRANSFORMING LIVES

Our vision: To create outstanding, transformative, research-connected learning experiences that empower our diverse community of students and teaching staff to achieve their highest potential.

Our Objectives:

i. **Grow and diversify a high-quality student intake** through the review and development of a portfolio that is driven by current and future market insight and opportunities to improve market share.

ii. **Deliver an outstanding and inclusive educational experience** through a coherent, distinctive and innovative curriculum.

iii. **Ensure distinctive research-connected teaching** across our learning and teaching practice.

iv. **Improve student experience** and feedback metrics and ensure a strong student voice and feedback framework.

v. **Support student success** working to eliminate award and continuation gaps.

vi. **Improve employability and graduate futures** through work-integrated learning and co-curricular activities as well as a connected alumni strategy.

Our Plan:

- **Manage portfolio through a new Faculty Programme Development Group (PDG)** to identify new programmes and opportunities working with marketing and strategic planning to increase recruitment and market share on existing and revised programmes.

- **Reduce the number of low-recruiting modules** creating clear pathways through programmes whilst still offering appropriate and manageable choice.

- **Implement the Liverpool Learning Framework** across the Faculty.

- **Ensure distinctive research-connected teaching** in our disciplines, working with the APVC Research and Impact.

- **Embed Digital Fluency through the curriculum** and explore the effective use of ethical generative AI.
- **Embed EDI** through an intentionally inclusive curriculum.
- **Improve Student Support** in line with the university-wide Transforming Student Support Project.
- **Review Education Attainment data** and produce plans to close gaps against institutional APP and REC targets.
- **Review Year in Industry/placement/internship** opportunities and **embedded employability** across programmes.
- **Work with APVC Global Engagement and Partnerships** to support progress towards 31% student mobility target.

Our Outputs:
- **Increased student numbers and diversified income** to deliver student numbers as agreed in Plan.
- **Improvements to student experience and student voice, as measured by NSS results and other student feedback mechanisms,** addressing uneven results across subjects and characteristics through NSS Action Plans and monitoring.
- **Improvements in Continuation** where below sector via effective Continuation Action plans and monitoring.
- **Improvements in Graduate Outcomes** working with the Graduate Outcomes Operations Group/Careers and Employability via introduction of Graduate Outcomes Action Plans and monitoring.
- **Greater opportunities for T&S innovation** through closer working with the Centre for Innovation in Education, The Academy and Research Institutes to support staff to innovate and develop new approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.
- **Clearer career pathways and recognition for educational innovation and leadership across** academic and professional services.

FROM LIVERPOOL, FOR THE WORLD

Our vision: To be recognised as a global Top 100 university, making a positive impact in the places we operate and the partnerships we build through outstanding research and education.

Our Objectives:

To develop existing and new partnerships that will:

i. **Enhance HSS international visibility**, capitalising upon and building strengths around ambitious, internationally focused, interdisciplinary funding initiatives.

ii. **Add value to our educational offer** and create opportunities for students and staff.

iii. **Provide development opportunities for colleagues as ambassadors** of the university and Liverpool City Region.

Our Plan:

- **Within Horizon Europe**, focus on Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowships, Starting Grants, Consolidator Grants, and Advanced Grants in order to strengthen our globally connected community.

- **Prioritise projects within AHRC/ESRC bilateral agreements** 1) with US National Science Foundation, Social, Behavioural and Economic Sciences Directorate (NSF-SBE) in order to capitalize on the long-standing research connections with UGA and other US partners; 2) with the German Research Foundation (DFG) where we already have a track record of success.

- **Increase HSS engagement with the networks to which the university belongs** (including RENKEI, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the Taiwan-UK University Consortium, the University Alliance of the Silk Road) through the Faculty Global Engagement & Partnerships Group.

- **Through the Partnerships & Collaborations Board**, use the three Task & Finish Groups (Reputation; Visibility; Industry) to identify priorities, successes, and gaps which assess the opportunities and challenges as well as setting ambitions.

- **Increase the number of in-bound and out-bound exchange students** to reach 31 x 31 target across all HSS departments by 2032.

Country & regional priorities
Education
- **China** – this continues to be a key area for both direct entry recruitment and articulation. The new and refreshed portfolio of UG & PGT programmes appeals to Chinese markets, including the suite of Business programmes (and the filling of gaps in our offer, such as BA English & Finance as 2+2 with XJTLU), Music (SJTU, SCNU, Sun Yat Sen U), Criminology & Criminal Justice, Translation, TESOL.
- **Malaysia** – long-standing agreements have been an important pipeline for articulations and direct entry into programmes in law and, more recently, ULMS. New agreements, such as with the Advanced Tertiary College, will bring more students onto the LLB programme.
- **Gulf & Middle East** – the partnership with Royal University for Women, Bahrain is established for programmes in law (and to be extended with LLM in International Business Law) and now to be extended to architecture plus other subjects. With RUW Bahrain as an anchor partner, and with strong institutional PGT recruitment from Kuwait, HSS will prioritise collaborations with Saudi Arabia, given its dominance in the region in HE, the on-going transformation of public universities into private, independent institutions, and the strong connections to industry.
- **India** – there is considerable scope, through TNE, to increase numbers in business and also architecture.

Research
- **Heritage** – long-standing partners stretch across a wide space, from India and Central Asia through the Gulf and North Africa, many of whose work come under the umbrella of the new Heritage Institute. There are also activities in Nigeria and Ghana. Beyond HEI, there are connections to the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the International Institute for Central Asian Studies (with interests in architecture, archaeology, history, languages, museum studies, climate change).
- **International slavery** – in collaboration with the International Slavery Museum at National Museums Liverpool, there are well established partnerships with UGA, the University of Alabama, and other US HEI, as well as with museums and heritage sites in the USA and western Australia.
- **Longitudinal & historical criminology** – spanning several schools, and working with non-HEIs in Australia, the USA, China, and Kazakhstan, this theme underpins partnerships with Western Australia and Nazarbayev, as well as being integral to the relationship with UGA.

- **Digital Media & Society** – exploring questions of digital inclusion, digital literacies, data analytics and AI use, colleagues based largely in the SotA collaborate with partners at the Queensland University of Technology, University of California Santa Barbara, and McMaster.
- **Ageing** – primarily based in the SLSJ, activities cross between the priority partners of XJTLU and McMaster.
- **Supply Chains** – focusing on modelling, digital transformation, and sustainability and decarbonisation of supply chains with a strong emphasis on logistics, and port and maritime studies. Based in the Management School with well-established collaborations with Schools in the Faculty of Science and Engineering and a growing number of international partnerships including McMaster and Hong Kong Polytechnic Universities.

From this, key partners are UGA (heritage, international slavery), Alabama (criminology, international slavery), McMaster (digital media & society, ageing), Nazarbayev (heritage, criminology), XJTLU (criminology, ageing).

Our Outputs:
- **Refreshed HSS Web presence** presenting 'single front door' to global partners and key stakeholders.
- **Student mobility** – A range of Faculty partnerships that will provide international mobility opportunities and create innovative employability and enterprise experiences to ensure every student is exposed to the right experiences to develop the skills and expertise they need during university and into their early career (target is 31% of Home UG, 1st degree students graduating in July 2031 to have an international experience of 5 days or more by 2031).
- **Development of existing and new international interdisciplinary research networks** which amongst other things support staff mobility and co-authored output generation.
- **Our partners of special interest** are currently:
  - University of Georgia in Athens
  - Aga Khan Trust for Culture
  - National Museums Liverpool
  - Unilever (for *Architecture of the United Africa Company* and *Lever Brother plantations in the DRC & Solomon Islands*)
  - Malawi-Liverpool – Wellcome Research Programme.

REGIONAL IMPACT FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE

Our vision: To drive prosperity and wellbeing for the Liverpool City Region through excellence in research, innovation and partnership for local and global impact.

Our Objectives:

i. **To articulate HSS's role and value in the Liverpool City Region** and beyond as a leading and influential partner in research-driven policymaking, business development and innovation in cultural and creative practice.

ii. **To build capacity and advance knowledge** with a wide range of businesses, civic, cultural organisations and collaborators, to carry out world changing research with impact for public benefit.

iii. **To better position HSS to sell our academic expertise and services** to industry and to ensure HSS is at the forefront of emerging opportunities for interdisciplinary bids.

iv. **To strengthen contributions to University submissions** to the Knowledge Exchange Framework and the principles and actions associated with the Knowledge Exchange Concordat.

v. **To create innovative employability and enterprise experiences** to ensure every student has equal access to the opportunities to develop the skills and expertise they need during university and into their early career.

vi. **To develop Faculty colleagues as ambassadors** of HSS in the Liverpool City Region to raise the profile and influence of HSS research.

Our Plan:

- **Through a new Industry focused Task and Finish Group** commissioned by the HSS Partnerships & Collaborations Board, better position HSS to sell our academic expertise and services to industry.
- **Ensure HSS is at the forefront of emerging opportunities** for interdisciplinary bids.

- **Understand the capacity and skills gaps across the Faculty** and to propose some targeted training for academic and professional services.
- **Taking an industry agnostic approach, identify several priority specialisms** that can be actively promoted to business (examples might include Sustainability, evidencing economic, environmental and societal impact, modern slavery, heritage).
- **Increase KTPs, consultancy and Innovate UK** applications in particular.
- **Develop strategy for promoting HSS Institutes and Centres** to civic, cultural and industry stakeholders.
- **Increase number of HSS staff who share their expertise** on local and regional boards and committees.
- **To continue to support and promote the Tung Auditorium** as a key cultural asset for the City Region and site for engagement with stakeholders.

Our Outputs:
- **A diverse and sustainable network of domestic partners** from industry, education and cultural and creative sectors.
- **Identification of partnerships and collaborations to be prioritised for investment across key areas of influence** (Creative and Cultural; Public Policy & Society; Education; Health & Wellbeing; Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Commerce), identifying synergies and opportunities for joining up activities to maximise impact.
- **The appropriate infrastructure, investment and working mechanisms** to ensure existing and new partnerships are supported and are leveraged to enhance reputation.
- **A faculty funding strategy to facilitate and grow our inclusive engagement** with partners to enable us to build knowledge together, to share knowledge, to provide access to knowledge and to be a good neighbour.
- **Refreshed HSS Web presence presenting 'single front door'** to civic partners and key stakeholders.
- **Business plan to further grow the impact our assets and resources** have in the city's arts, cultural and heritage ecosystem and to showcase our strengths.

GREAT PEOPLE, LIMITLESS POTENTIAL

Our vision: To foster an inspirational, welcoming and inclusive culture in which all can thrive and reach their full potential, recognising and celebrating the strengths of our diverse communities and building collaboration, engagement and high quality support into all that we do.

Our Objectives:

i. **To create and sustain an environment within which all staff can excel** by providing innovative developmental opportunities to meet institutional and personal aspirations.

ii. **To ensure that all staff appointments attract and retain high quality staff** who positively influence the performance of the faculty and University.

iii. **Embed equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of all we do.**

iv. **To recognise where the underrepresentation of people with protected characteristics** exists within certain job types including senior roles, and to take active measures to enhance processes across the staff life-cycle to address this.

v. **To encourage, empower and enable all staff to enact their broader citizenship** of the University and embody our University values.

vi. **To create a safe, vibrant and active campus** for all students and staff.

Our Plan:

- **To develop a Faculty People & Culture Strategy** building on our established staffing principles and existing good practice.

- **Our major commitment to staff development will inform team development, PDR and appointments and promotions**. We will use institutional tools available for setting staff expectations and rewarding performance, recognising disciplinary differences in expected outcomes.

- **To use lessons learnt from our participation in EDI charters** to implement, track and refresh our existing individual actions plans (Athena Swan; REC; Concordat; Technician Commitment), synergising where possible to maximise intersectional impact.

- **Set a clear expectation that all schools reach Athena Swan Silver by 2031.**

- **We will invest in developing diverse and sustainable talent pipelines,** encouraging staff to consider ways in which they can develop their careers and share their expertise.
- **Workload allocation will be carefully managed and monitored,** irrespective of career path or job type, and considering EDI issues.
- **All academic staff will contribute to the teaching of students** and support will be provided to enable them to enhance/recognise their teaching expertise.
- **Academic colleagues with responsibility for research will be recognised via the new Contributions Framework**, for their different types of contributions. Colleagues on the T&S pathway will have the responsibility to produce scholarship, defined broadly as output or external engagement which ensures the work they do influences the sector or profession.
- **Support and nurture the specialisation and functional development of professional services staff**, working alongside relevant central professional services teams, providing all staff with opportunities to participate in communities of practice, networks and the University outside of their own team.
- **To support staff mental health and well-being** through reviewing and improving the staff experience and measuring progress through staff survey metrics and reduced long term sickness absence.
- **To underpin all HR aspects of our work with a strong commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion**. FLT will regularly review data and qualitative indicators of staff and students experience and will look at underrepresentation, pipeline issues and group difference in experience.

Our Outputs:
- **Faculty People & Culture Strategy.**
- **Improved diversity** across our staff and student communities.
- **Regularly reviewed workload allocation models**, administered through systems that allow the analysis of effectiveness and fairness.
- **Comprehensive EDI data framework** which underpins all HR related decision making and our numerous action plans and inform statutory returns.
- **Synergistic view of various action plans.**
- **Robust succession plans.**
- **Improved indicators of staff experience** such as staff surveys and a reduction in sickness absence.

FUTURE-GAZERS, SOCIETY-CHANGERS

Our vision: To drive forward environmental and social equity through our education, research and operations, making a positive impact within and beyond our boundaries.

Our Objectives:

i. **Our multi-disciplinary research will create global impact** in addressing the greatest challenges facing today's society.

ii. **Our students will be empowered as global citizens** to make a difference in a changing world.

iii. **Sustainability will underpin how we operate** within and beyond our organisational boundaries.

Our Plan:

- **Develop the faculty's organisational capability to embed a sustainable approach to all areas of faculty operations**, through providing training and developing supportive networks that enable staff to understand how they can personally contribute to sustainable operations and activity, and through showcasing good practice such as more sustainable alternatives.

- **Contribute to the University's environmental and social sustainability objectives**, including understanding those activities which have the greatest sustainability impact (e.g. travel, capital development, procurement.

- **Participating in relevant collaborative and external frameworks** such as LEAF, ISO14001.

- **Develop a nuanced understanding of what sustainability means for each of our academic disciplines**, including existing and potential areas of research, professional and academic body guidance, disciplinary specific challenges, and relevant operational and funding drivers.

- **Ensure that the working and learning environment supports** all staff and students to undertake their activities sustainably.

- **Ensure that academic and professional activity relating to sustainability is shared and recorded in relevant systems** to enable collaboration and to support accurate and positive data returns for relevant league table metrics.

Our Outputs:

- **A training matrix** outlining required levels of knowledge and skill according to roles.

- **Increase participation in university awareness** raising initiatives such as sustainability week.

- **A faculty approach to sustainable operating principles**, developed collaboratively as needed with other faculties and university specialist teams.

- **To socialise Sustainable Events Guidance within HSS** incorporating the hybrid events pilot that was recently carried out.

- **To continue actively contributing to University activity**, including active participation in environmental sustainability initiatives, academic and professional contribution to university plans and policies, and supporting the University to meet the requirements of ISO14001 and other external accreditation standards.

- **Identify how each of our HSS academic disciplines engages with sustainability** within their academic and professional practice, and supports the development of relevant expertise, systems and practice.

- **Relevant labs to maintain LEAF standards** or equivalent external frameworks.

- **Cross disciplinary educational opportunities** centred on sustainability to be considered as part of curriculum review.

- **Recording of research in relation to SDGs** in IRIS.