



RECOVERY & RENEWAL

Universities
Scotland



UNIVERSITIES SCOTLAND
STRATEGY
2021-24



OUR CONVENER

I'm proud to present Universities Scotland's strategy for 2021-24: Recovery and Renewal.

Scottish higher education is world leading and now more than ever its contribution will be vital to inclusive, sustainable renewal and economic growth in Scotland.

Through our teaching, research and knowledge exchange, we are the catalyst for recovery and growth in the communities we serve. By using our expertise, technology and networks, we will support a just transition to a thriving, fairer society and sustainable, greener economy.

I strongly believe that Universities Scotland will be a leading force for recovery and renewal over the next three years, with profound impacts in Scotland and around the world.

Thank you for joining us on this journey of opportunity and renewal.

Professor Sir Gerry McCormac

Convener of Universities Scotland

Principal & Vice Chancellor of the University of Stirling

OUR MISSION

Universities Scotland is the collective voice of 19 higher education institutions in Scotland. Our mission is the advancement of higher education in Scotland by influencing the policy, legislative and financial environment.

As part of Universities UK, we act in accordance with UUK's mission to create the conditions for our universities to be the best in the world; maximising their positive impact locally, nationally and globally.

A young man and woman are smiling and looking at a screen. The screen displays several colorful sticky notes in shades of pink, purple, and green. The text 'WE ARE THE COLLECTIVE VOICE' is overlaid in large, bold, orange letters.

WE ARE THE
COLLECTIVE
VOICE

OUR VISION

Our 2021-24 Strategy is developed at the early stages of society's recovery from the global pandemic, and in a period of adjustment following the UK's departure from the EU.

Our vision for 2024 is that higher education can make a full contribution to an education-led, green and inclusive economic recovery with social renewal in a globally connected Scotland.

This will be a major step forward in attaining the university sector's overall Vision for 2030 setting out how universities will develop to meet the needs of learners and society. The pandemic has accelerated the need for change set out in that vision, and has made our contribution to the nation and the world even more important.

OUR PRIORITIES

PRIORITY

OUTCOME

We will prioritise policy and advocacy action that builds universities' contribution to recovery and renewal as we emerge from the most intense phase of the pandemic.

Our five key priorities and the outcomes we intend to achieve are as follows:

The big picture.

All the strands of our work will contribute to a confident and well-evidenced overall story about how the university sector will be a force for prosperity, social inclusion and environmental responsibility, crucial to building a sustainable future, nationally and internationally.

Deeper political support for universities' contribution, informing policy and financial decisions.

Access to high-quality higher education.

We will support and promote universities' efforts to ensure that any home student who has the potential to achieve an excellent education at a Scottish university has the opportunity to do so.

We will ensure that students from across the UK and the world are able to benefit from an excellent quality of provision at Scottish universities.

We will influence the policy and funding environment to enable this.

Students benefit from HE funded at a level consistent with the cost of high-quality provision.

Publicly-funded student places expand to meet increased demand from learners.

Government and education sector-wide policy that supports further progress on wide access to university for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.

PRIORITY

OUTCOME

Skills for recovery.

We will promote the excellence of universities' graduates and support them to thrive in a changing economic and social landscape.

We will advocate for a flexible skills policy framework and for a breadth of education that will build the graduate skills and attributes to drive a green and inclusive recovery.

Universities' development of graduates' broad attributes supported by government policy.

Increased opportunities for learners and employers to benefit from flexible higher education opportunities.

Graduate Apprenticeships funded sustainably as part of universities' contribution.

Excellent research and innovation for a better world.

We will promote the sector's capacity for world-leading research and innovation, which will be a key driver of a green and inclusive social and economic recovery.

We will campaign for policy and funding decisions that enable this, including support for fundamental research, mission-driven research, and knowledge exchange between universities and the wider economy. We will influence Scottish and UK-level policy development to achieve this.

We will be a place where members can explore emerging ideas for collaborations for research and innovation, to enable Scotland's universities to contribute and to leverage resources into the country.

Universities' research & innovation contribution to the recovery effectively supported by Scottish and UK policy and funding.

Increased Scottish university success in leveraging in UKRI support for research and innovation.





PRIORITY

OUTCOME

Global impact in a competitive and collaborative world.

As the UK continues to adapt to its post-Brexit place in the world, we will work to protect and enhance universities' global impact through their world-leading research and internationally renowned teaching and learning, working to ensure that policy enables universities to build partnerships, and enhances staff and student mobility.

Universities presented as a central part of Scotland's brand proposition.

Scottish scheme to attract international student talent and outward mobility.

Effective influence (working with UUKi) on UK-level policy in this priority area.

Scotland's universities operate in multiple ecosystems: we will monitor those ecosystems closely for new areas of opportunities or risk, adapting our priorities as our environment changes. The UK policy, funding and political environment is one example of this.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

Cross-cutting themes through all our work will be:

The common good.

We will campaign to support the breadth of universities' contribution to the common good on issues including the renewal of 'place', the wellbeing of the communities we are part of, and action to address global health and the climate emergency.

Equality and equity.

We will support the development of sector-wide policy and action to make Scottish universities safe and inclusive spaces for all, and campaign to ensure recognition of universities' achievements on this front.

Universities' diversity and collegiality.

We will celebrate and promote the diverse contributions of Scotland's higher education institutions to the nation's recovery and renewal. Our policy and advocacy work will promote strength in this diversity, while emphasising the shared values and priorities of our members.

Sustainable support.

We will campaign to secure sustainable funding for Scottish universities' contribution across the range of our priorities, and policies from the UK and Scottish Governments that support universities' contribution.

We also look forward to working with the proponents of all constitutional options for Scotland's future, to ensure that they support universities' continued contribution to the nation's renewal and success.



WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS WITH:

Leadership: we will lead the pro-active development of the sector's policy and advocacy, challenging existing government and sectoral policy where necessary.

Integrity: we will ensure that all our policy development and advocacy work is built on well-evidenced argument and accurate data. We will be authentic in presenting universities as a force for good.

Focus: we will concentrate our efforts where we can achieve the greatest collective impact for the sector, testing all projects against the priorities outlined in this strategy.

Stories: we will tell the story of the sector's contribution, going beyond argument and evidence to present the real human impact of universities on the common good.

We will also use our membership of Universities UK to amplify our influence on UK-level policy to help us to achieve our objectives.





**Universities
Scotland**



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