



ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2009 – 2013

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ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2013

MISSION

Our mission is to continue to be an internationally competitive teaching and research University which addresses global challenges and is responsive to the needs of the local community, of Wales and of the wider world.

In order to deliver our mission we aim to :

- provide students with learning opportunities of the highest quality and offer a distinctive environment for study;
- respond to the changing needs of society for skilled, educated and employable graduates;
- produce high quality research which is internationally acknowledged, responding to intellectual, cultural, social and economic needs;
- work in partnership to serve the community, the UK, Europe and the wider world;
- play a full part in the social, cultural and economic development of Wales, including support for the Welsh language.

In order to achieve these aims, the University has identified ten strategic aims, which are elaborated upon in its plans.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE PLANNING PERIOD

The University has identified a number of key priorities for the current planning period. The University's approach to them will be informed by the requirement to ensure its sustainability over the next five years and beyond. These priorities are enlarged upon further in the main body of this plan, where they are placed in the context of the strategic aims identified for the University.

i. Responding to the external environment

The University has a major role to play in contributing to the development and success of HE in Wales and particularly in supporting the economic, cultural and social development of Wales. In order to fulfil this role and to address the challenges of the constantly changing environment in which it

operates, the University has developed robust processes to monitor its performance. These will also assist the University to identify ways in which it can continue to expand and develop its activities and to best place itself within the marketplace, responding to the evolving needs and priorities of its major stakeholders and securing a sustainable future. The University has identified the following priorities for the current planning period:

- To address the potential reductions in public expenditure as they may feed through to the HE sector, including planning on the basis of at least a 5% cut in expenditure across the University's activities; and to support individual departments to develop the strategies and processes necessary to absorb these reductions.
- To monitor the economic, social, political and demographic changes in the external environment which could impact on the University's ability to continue to recruit students; and to ensure that its student recruitment processes and marketing strategies are responsive and appropriately resourced to adapt to a changing student recruitment market.
- To monitor developments relating to the future form of national research assessment, the Research Excellence Framework (REF); and to ensure that internal methods for monitoring research performance and supporting research excellence place the University in a strong position to respond to the demands of REF.
- To contribute to the achievement of the Welsh Assembly Government's *Reaching Higher* Strategy in ways which are appropriate to its mission, including meeting the specific targets contained in the *Reaching Higher* template, and to engage in a number of activities which will assist in responding to the Reaching Higher priorities.
- To engage with the National Assembly's *One Wales* agenda, promoting and contributing to the priority of 'learning for life' and to respond appropriately to the Transformation agenda.
- To respond fully to decisions of the WAG, following its consideration of the outcomes of the Strategic Review of HE in Wales.
- To continue to maintain and develop appropriate partnerships and collaborations with HE institutions and other public and private sector bodies, where such links will enhance the University's teaching, research, administration and third mission activities.

ii. Financial Sustainability

Operating within a financial climate which is subject to considerable change, the University will continue to manage its resources carefully and proactively, to ensure that it is able to sustain its core activities and invest in future developments. In particular, it will work to ensure that it is able to deal with changes in funding which may arise in the next five years and will continue to seek to increase income from existing and new income streams. Priorities identified for the medium term are:

- To implement policies designed to ensure the financial sustainability of the University.
- To maintain effective and efficient financial management.
- To maintain a sound financial position and ensure financial resilience.
- To expand the University's work in fundraising, seeking to secure a more robust and sustainable endowment funding stream.
- To continue the process of implementing our ten year Estates Strategy in order to contribute to our long-term sustainability.

The main challenge for the medium term is ensuring the economic sustainability of the University's activities, to ensure financial resilience and maintain financial health in the context of the increasing financial constraints placed on public expenditure. The University will seek to meet these challenges by continuing to diversify its sources of income, by increasing the proportion which derives from sources other than the Funding Council and by continuing to maintain strict financial controls.

iii. Research

Research is an integral part of The University's mission and work. In an increasingly competitive and selective funding environment the University will combine ambition with realism in its planning, identify areas of competitive advantage, benchmark itself against international comparators and pursue an integrated strategy. The University notes the following priorities in research over the next five years:

- To implement the revised strategy with its objectives and associated targets.

- To engage in high quality research which sets intellectual and policy agendas and attracts increased income from Research Councils and other research funders.
- To maximise AU's ratings in the successor to the RAE, building on the success in the 2008 RAE.
- To implement the aims and deliver the objectives of the Aberystwyth/Bangor Research and Enterprise Partnership and other research collaborations within and beyond Wales.
- To maximise the opportunities presented by the merger of IGER into the structure of AU, building research and teaching excellence within the newly established Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS).
- To continue to identify and exploit opportunities for collaboration.
- To emphasise the economic and social impact of research and to stimulate the linkages between research, enterprise and innovation.

The main challenge for the medium term is continuing to attract the level of funding necessary to support world class research during a period of increasing selectivity in research funding. The University will meet this challenge through the implementation of its revised Research Strategy to improve the quality of its research outputs and to encourage and stimulate applications for external funding. The University will also work to develop the aims and objectives of the Aberystwyth/Bangor Research and Enterprise Partnership, to embed the research expertise of IGER into AU and, with Bangor University, to establish a strategic alliance in the area of the biological, life and environmental sciences.

iv. Student Recruitment and Academic Provision

The University has succeeded in recent years in building a strong position in the student recruitment marketplace, often against national subject recruitment trends. Its success in this area has been supported by continuing work in the areas of marketing and of bursary provision and student support as well as in the provision of a high quality portfolio which is regularly reviewed through a responsive system of portfolio renewal. As a result, the University is confident of its ability to maintain student numbers over the next five to ten years, in an increasingly competitive market. A number of priorities in relation to this area are:

- To maintain an effective and transparent bursary system which will support widening participation and other key objectives in student recruitment, including equality of opportunity for all students.
- To continue to develop the *Reaching Wider* Widening Access Partnership to meet regional needs and address the Widening Access Strategy of HEFCW and the Welsh Assembly Government.
- To provide a varied portfolio of courses which adapts to new intellectual agendas and is aligned with the needs of a diverse student body and the world of work.
- To ensure a high quality of teaching provision across the portfolio and to maintain high levels of student satisfaction.
- To enhance Welsh-medium teaching provision.

The main challenges for the medium term are retaining our student numbers, through continued good recruitment and through improving retention rates, and enhancing the student experience to meet the needs of a diverse student body and to continue to widen access to HE to ensure that barriers to study are identified and removed. The University will meet these challenges by offering flexible pathways into HE, an effective and transparent bursary system to support widening access, and a portfolio of courses which adapts to a changing world and is aligned with the needs of a diverse student body. The University will continue to enhance its student support activities and to develop and focus its marketing strategies.

v. Governance, Staffing and Sustainability

In all its activities the University will seek to ensure that good governance practice standards are met. Priorities in relation to this area are:

- To promote equality of opportunity for staff and students, reviewing and implementing policies to ensure that good practice in equality is disseminated and further embedded across all the University's activities.
- To provide a modern information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and exploit its potential for supporting teaching, research and effective communications.
- To promote personal career review and development and to provide appropriate support services for staff at all levels.
- To develop and support existing and future leaders and managers of academic and support services.

- To maintain and develop the physical infrastructure so as to support the University's mission.
- To be a responsive, efficient and accountable organisation.
- To respond, through the curriculum and through practical measures, to issues of sustainability, waste management and energy efficiency.
- To continue to review environmental policies and expand environmental initiatives, in pursuance of the ISO 14001 Environmental Management System Standard.
- To develop the University's ten year Estates Strategy.

The main challenges for the medium term are continuing to attract and retain high quality academic and support staff in an increasingly competitive marketplace and whilst ensuring that the University's equalities policy is fully implemented to ensure that there are no barriers to the University's ability to recruit excellent staff. Challenges to the maintenance of the fabric of the University exist in making appropriate progress with backlog maintenance and the improvement of the estate in the context of the revised Estates Strategy. The University will meet these challenges by working on strategies for developing, motivating and rewarding staff and will work to develop its Human Resources services, ensuring the implementation and ongoing review of its equalities policy and monitoring of its impact. The University will also work to generate and release funds for improving and developing the estate and will ensure that there are appropriate processes for the effective management of building and maintenance projects.

PLANNING PROCESS

This Strategic Plan provides the context for, and is supported by, a range of specific strategies, each of which has its own action plan and/or annual operating plan. These include:

- Research Strategy (see section 1)
- Learning and Teaching Strategy (see section 2)
- Postgraduate Strategy (see sections 1 and 2)
- Widening Access Strategy (see section 3)
- Welsh Medium Strategy (see section 4)
- Race Equality Policy (see section 5)
- Staff Development Strategy (see section 5)

- Third Mission Strategy – Joint with Bangor University (see sections 7 and 4)
- Information Services Strategy (including the new e-learning strategy – see section 8)
- Estates Strategy (see section 9)
- Capital Funding Strategy (see section 9)
- Waste Policy (see section 9)

Both the Strategic Plan and the specific strategies and action plans which support it are reviewed annually.

This Strategic Plan is supplemented by the University's 'Operational Plan', produced annually and published both for circulation within the University and on the University website. The Operational Plan outlines particular challenges faced during the forthcoming year, and key priorities for the planning period. The document sets the agenda for the annual planning round and is considered a key document in the University's strategic planning process.

MONITORING OF PLANS

In addition to the monitoring arrangements in place for the individual plans which support this Strategic Plan, we monitor our progress against the targets set out in this plan on an annual basis and report this to the University's Council. Progress against targets is considered as part of the process for revising targets for the next year to ensure that all of the targets contained in the plan are achievable and realistic whilst remaining ambitious.

STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. RESEARCH

To produce high quality research which is internationally acknowledged, responding to intellectual, cultural, social and economic needs.

Research is an integral part of the University's mission and work. It is supported by a Research Strategy, the purpose of which is to ensure that the University can continue to produce a significant volume of high quality work and respond to the rapidly changing environment in the UK in relation to research and its funding.

The University will seek to:

- Improve the quality of its research.
- Increase the impact of its research.
- Increase the volume of its research.
- Increase the income from external sources of funding.
- Ensure the economic sustainability of its research.
- Increase the number of postgraduate research students.

1. Strategic Objectives

In an increasingly competitive and selective funding environment, the University will combine ambition with realism in its planning, identify areas of competitive advantage, benchmark itself against international comparators and pursue an integrated strategy in order to:

- support existing areas of research which are internationally competitive and increase the proportion of research which is of international excellence,
- ensure that all teaching is informed by research and scholarship, and that all members of staff participate in the development of their subject,
- address the strategic priorities of the Research Councils and other funding bodies,
- exploit its intellectual property by developing its portfolio of third mission activities,

- maintain a portfolio of research activity whose outputs address the intellectual, cultural, scientific and economic needs of Wales and other parts of the UK,
- contribute directly to economic development through knowledge transfer,
- enhance its postgraduate portfolio, increase the numbers of postgraduate research students and ensure that all postgraduate students are equipped with transferable skills and are inducted into the research culture of their department.

2. Implementation

In order to be able to achieve its objectives, the University will:

- support existing areas of international excellence,
- encourage areas in which there is demonstrated potential to produce research of high quality and reduce research support for uncompetitive areas,
- develop effective research leadership at all levels of the University and manage the research environment so that effort is focussed and value for money achieved,
- continue to operate robust appointment, probation and promotion procedures which take research achievement and potential into account,
- monitor the research performance of staff and departments,
- develop partnerships with other universities, particularly when there are discernable advantages of addressing the strategic priorities of the Research Councils and other funders,
- enhance the awareness of the economic and social impact of research,
- exploit the University's intellectual property and increase income generation from contract research and technology transfer,
- facilitate an inter-disciplinary approach to address significant research income and priorities,
- identify appropriate mechanisms to ensure that teaching is informed by research and scholarship,
- encourage and stimulate applications for external funding and develop institutional arrangements for the support of research grant applications and the management of grants,
- develop a full understanding of the true cost of research, raise the level of indirect cost recovery to cover the Full Economic Cost (FEC)

of research and ensure accountability for the use of resources and sustain a stable financial base,

- continue to monitor the development of new forms of research assessment,
- ensure an appropriate level of infrastructure for research through strategic deployment of the Research Capital Investment Fund.

3. Targets

In the period to July 2010 the University will:

- implement its revised research strategy,
- increase income from Research Councils to £12.5m,
- increase research income from other sources to £12.9m,
- seek opportunities for the further development of the Aberystwyth/Bangor Research and Enterprise Partnership,
- support other Research collaborations which can demonstrate that they are strategic, structural and sustainable,
- implement a new postgraduate recruitment action plan to increase the number of postgraduate students by 5% (including taught courses and 1+3 PhD),
- work in collaboration with other universities in Wales,
- continue to monitor and assess the research performance of staff and the systems of research support within departments in order to further enhance research performance.

In the period to July 2011 the University will:

- develop its strategy for the REF, including its mechanisms for evidencing and assessing the impact of its research,
- review its organisation of and support for research,
- seek to align its research strategy with that of Bangor University as part of the developing collaboration between the two universities,
- increase income from Research Councils to £13.3m,
- increase research income from other sources to £13.7m,
- develop a Graduate School
- increase the number of postgraduate students by 15% (including taught courses and 1+3 PhD),
- following the formation of IBERS, and in collaboration with Bangor, establish a world-class research alliance in the area of the biological, life and environmental sciences.

4. Risks

The following risks have been identified and they will be monitored and managed throughout the period of the plan:

- failure to maintain or increase quality and volume of research outputs,
- failure of staff to engage successfully with the research impact agenda or to demonstrate successful engagement with this agenda,
- failure to respond to the changing priorities of funders of research,
- failure to maintain or increase research income (both QR and external income),
- failure to recruit, develop and retain high-quality academic staff,
- failure to maintain or increase recruitment of postgraduate research students and/or failure to maintain or improve progression and completion rates,
- failure to deliver the objectives of the AU/BU Research and Enterprise Partnership,
- failure to fully capitalise on the potential benefits of the IGER merger.

2. LEARNING AND TEACHING

To provide students with learning opportunities of the highest quality and offering a distinctive environment for study.

1. Strategic Objectives

The University's current Learning and Teaching Strategy runs to 2010 and was updated in 2007 in the light of the most recent HEFCW guidelines. The University's five strategic aims for its learning and teaching activities are:

- to facilitate enhancement of learning and teaching,
- to improve the learning and teaching infrastructure,
- to promote and reward excellence in the provision of learning and teaching,
- to enhance the portfolio and develop innovative teaching methods,
- to develop collaborative links in the delivery of learning and teaching.

2. Implementation

In order to achieve these aims the University will continue to:

- review its portfolio and teaching practices to ensure the highest quality provision:
 - ensuring that teaching and programme development are informed by current research and scholarship,
 - reviewing learning and teaching in order to continue to meet the needs of a diverse student body,
 - developing more effective means of identifying and sharing good practice,
 - enhancing the effectiveness of teaching quality through improved high quality internal and external quality assurance procedures, taking into account feedback on our QAA Institutional and Estyn Reviews,
 - ensuring that all academic departments develop and review their learning and teaching and assessment strategies and practices in light of the developing institutional strategy and the changing external environment,
 - identifying and developing high quality undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in new or emerging areas,
 - encouraging collaboration with other HEIs to enhance or secure provision in specific subject areas,

- develop its postgraduate provision:
 - enhancing generic and subject-specific research training and transferable skills development for postgraduates to address the requirements of the Research Councils and the needs of employers,
 - reviewing opportunities for collaboration in provision of postgraduate research training,

- embed the development of its Learning and Teaching Strategy:
 - ensuring that the requirements of the Learning and Teaching Strategy are addressed,
 - ensuring that departments and central services sections contribute fully to the development of and respond to the challenges of the Learning and Teaching Strategy in their Strategic Plans,
 - continuing to engage with issues arising from the Bologna process, including ECTS and the Diploma Supplement,

- provide adequate resources for the development of learning and teaching :
 - utilising capital funding to provide staff and students with access to the physical resources, facilities and technical infrastructure necessary to achieve the aims of the Learning and Teaching Strategy,
 - promoting and facilitating the appropriate use of information and communications technology (ICT) as a means of improving access to learning and enhancing the quality and effectiveness of the learning and teaching experience,

- ensure that its staff recruitment, development and support are aligned with its strategy for developing and enhancing learning and teaching :
 - developing and reviewing a staff development programme which supports the Learning and Teaching Strategy,
 - continuing to develop the tHE for all academic staff new to teaching and to link it to the probationary compact,
 - improving the dissemination of information on good practice in learning and teaching,
 - further embedding peer observation of teaching,
 - continuing to support and publicise the teaching award scheme, together with an award scheme for graduate teaching assistants,
 - encouraging staff involvement in external QA review and audit activities, for example with QAA, Estyn and professional bodies,
 - promoting links with the HE Academy and work with colleagues in Wales to promote learning enhancement across the sector,

- enhance and develop Welsh-medium provision:
 - identifying and developing new or existing programmes to facilitate new pathways to entry and progression, flexible modes of study and enhanced Welsh medium provision,
 - participating in Higher Education Sector Group initiatives to develop Welsh-medium provision,
 - building on existing collaborations in Welsh-medium teaching and developing new initiatives,

- ensure that skills for employability are embedded throughout the curriculum:

- enhancing student skills and employability through the implementation of the Employability Strategy and Action Plan 2009-14,
- reviewing the portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to identify strengths and opportunities for developing modules promoting global sustainability and citizenship,
- explore collaborative initiatives to develop its activities:
 - supporting collaborative initiatives that promote a holistic approach to the development and exploitation of academic library and IT resources in Wales,
 - exploring new opportunities for partnership working in the public sector as the ambitious Public Sector Broadband Aggregation Project is gradually rolled out,
 - extending the existing collaborative arrangements for provision of the PGCHE (the tHE), to include a wider range of HE partners within and beyond Wales as resources allow,
 - strengthening contact and sharing best practice with other PDP providers across the UK.

3. Targets

In the period to July 2010 the University will:

- aim to achieve student retention of two percentage points above its benchmark,
- embed Peer Observation of staff,
- increase to 13.5% the proportion of Welsh domicile students taking an element of their course through the medium of Welsh,
- implement the targets in the e-learning strategy,
- complete the roll out e-APPR (Academic and Personal Progress Review) across all departments, building on the success of the programme in 2008/09,
- develop five new academic programmes,
- improve the effectiveness of student course representatives by ensuring appropriate training.

4. Risks

The following risks to our success in this area have been identified and they will be monitored and, where possible, managed throughout the period:

- failure to recruit and retain high quality students,
- failure to attract students to new courses created as a result of work on portfolio development,
- failure to recruit, develop or retrain high quality staff,
- failure to respond in a timely fashion to changes in the external environment,
- failure to increase the proportion of Welsh-domiciled students taking an element of their course through the medium of Welsh.

3. WIDENING ACCESS AND DELIVERY

To continue to widen access for students from diverse backgrounds, including students from the local community, and to broaden the delivery mechanisms of our provision in terms of part-time study and distance learning, in order to widen access to higher education and to support the demand for lifelong learning.

1. Strategic Objectives

The University works to ensure that Higher Education is accessible to as many students as possible by proactively seeking to identify and address any potential barriers to application and attendance and by providing appropriate support for all students and staff. Our Widening Access strategy seeks to:

- widen access among the local community, especially Communities First Areas, and other areas of particular need and low participation,
- widen access among Communities First Areas in our wider geographic region, following the limits of operation on the West and Mid-Wales Widening Access Partnership,
- raise the aspirations and achievements of school pupils, by developing their academic potential and familiarising them with the opportunities offered by higher education,
- widen access to Welsh-medium study,
- continue to widen access to science, building on the success of increasing entrants to science in Aberystwyth, and to address gender imbalances where they exist in specific disciplines,
- increase retention and achievement of vulnerable students, particularly those from a widening access background and those leaving care and estranged from their families,

- widen access for ethnic minority students, refugees and economic migrants, those with disabilities, and with other barriers to entering higher education.
- work with partner organisations to address the implications of the economic downturn and in particular to assist adults to achieve the necessary skills to access employment.

2. Implementation

In order to achieve this, the University will:

- continue to provide a programme which enables people from the widening access target groups to re-enter education and which builds the skills and confidence necessary to progress to accredited courses,
- provide courses with a clear progression route to internal departments, and other local provision, such as Coleg Ceredigion and training organisations,
- continue to monitor admissions to assess progress in reaching the identified widening access target groups,
- continue to provide specialist activities to encourage women to enter degree schemes where they continue to be underrepresented, by working with appropriate national bodies,
- continue to evaluate programmes through questionnaires and thorough reporting,
- encourage and support links between the AU Centre for Widening Participation and Social Inclusion and departments engaged with widening access activities,
- encourage and support links between the AU Centre for Widening Participation and Social Inclusion and the West and Mid Wales Widening Access Partnership, in particular where projects and activities have a local dimension,
- seek to develop closer links with community organisations and other education providers,
- continue to develop innovative ways of reaching out to potential learners from communities with no tradition of accessing HE through community education, 'taster' courses and out of school activities,
- provide appropriate support for students entering AU as a result of widening access activities in order to assist them in continuing their studies and to minimise student withdrawal by providing a peer-mentoring scheme (Signpost),

- provide appropriate support for students entering Welsh-medium courses at AU as a result of widening access activities, and in particular work with the all Wales Mentro Iaith project,
- provide any student with a disability with a clear statement of the package of student support available,
- use available resources to minimise the physical obstacles that prevent people with disabilities from entering and participating fully in university life,
- ensure that all academic departments take proper account of the needs of students with disabilities and those from widening access target groups,
- continue the implementation of the outcomes of the review of student support services, including the revised structure for student support services, the integration of services for students with disabilities with learning support and language support services, enhanced support for students experiencing mental health problems and the development of an enhanced mentoring scheme.

3. Targets

In the period to July 2010 the University will work towards achieving the short-term targets identified in its Widening Access Strategy, including:

- increasing the number of undergraduate new entrants from Welsh Community First areas (targets for each year to 2010/11 have been established by the University as part of its contribution to *Reaching Higher* targets),
- continue to develop the e-mentoring Welsh medium project with the West and Mid Wales Partnership, to assist with widening access to Welsh medium study,
- monitoring of the introduction of new bursaries and implementing support systems for students leaving care, for the September 2009 in-take,
- exploring opportunities to develop a new Access to Science scheme for people within the community who seek entry to science study schemes but who are prevented from doing so by the lack of formal qualifications.

In the period to July 2011 the University will:

- deliver a programme of non-award bearing activities for 380 persons (at least 50% of whom live in Communities' First areas),

developing skills and confidence, raising awareness about existing opportunities for continued education and providing guidance and support to re-enter education,

- work closely with schools in which a low proportion of pupils progress to higher education, implementing a range of activities, reaching out to at least 1,250 pupils of various ages, raising their aspirations, developing their academic potential and increasing interest in higher education,
- include bilingual delivery in most of its widening access programmes and provide specifically Welsh-medium activities for at least 38 persons to promote education through the medium of Welsh,
- reach out to 750 persons in remote communities and schools with a range of activities to raise awareness of the importance of science, upgrade skills levels and increase access to science education,
- seek to improve retention rates in AU and to provide mentoring sessions to at least 80 students at potential high risk of withdrawal,
- reach out to ethnic minority pupils to ensure they represent at least 25% of the Taste of University Life participating pupils.

4. Risks

The following risks to our success in this area have been identified and they will be monitored and, where possible, managed throughout the period:

- withdrawal of external funding available to support this activity,
- reduction in Widening Access funding over the period,
- failure to recruit students to these activities or engage the interest and involvement of schools or other community organisations,
- failure to retain the more vulnerable students; this is a particular risk associated with this activity and many of the factors which may lead to withdrawal are beyond the University's control,
- the economic downturn, combined with changes to student financial support, may make it more difficult to promote Higher Education to those from low-income backgrounds.

4. MEETING THE NEEDS OF WALES

To play a full part in the social, cultural and economic development and needs of Wales, including support for the Welsh language.

1. Strategic Objectives

The University is committed to maintaining and developing flexible, high quality provision to meet the broader social, cultural and economic needs of Wales. Its key strategic aims are to:

- increase recruitment from Wales,
- implement and meet the targets of the University's Welsh Language Education Strategy and the Welsh Higher Education Sector Group,
- support the development and seek to ensure the sustainability of subjects of specific strategic importance to Wales,
- increase links between the University and the local community, including SMEs,
- widen access to university provision and facilities available to the community,
- undertake and stimulate research of particular relevance to the understanding and development of the society, economy and culture of Wales.

2. Implementation

In order to achieve these objectives the University will:

- respond to the priorities outlined in the Welsh Assembly Government's *One Wales : A Progressive Agenda for the Government of Wales*, specifically the priority to develop a 'higher education system which offers a broad range of learning opportunities, is responsive to the needs of students and employers and tackles poverty and disadvantage',
- market its provision throughout Wales, in both languages,

- develop and maintain close relations with schools, colleges and adult learners,
- increase the range of courses available to those who wish to learn through the medium of Welsh, to seek to stimulate demand for such courses,
- collaborate fully with other HE institutions, the Higher Education Sector Group, the Welsh Medium Teaching Development Centre and the Welsh-medium Subject Panels in order to develop greater Welsh-medium capacity across the sector,
- continue to develop the University's subject portfolio in line with changing patterns of social and professional demand,
- provide development facilities for the business sector (for example See3D and the Creative Business Units allied to the Arts Centre) and engage with employers on a range of issues including graduate employability and student placements,
- increase research and contract income so as to contribute to wealth, job creation and economic development in Wales through the provision of services to industry, company formation and patent income generation.

3. Targets

In the period to July 2010 the University will:

- meet its annual *Reaching Higher* target for increasing the number of Welsh-domiciled full-time HE students enrolled at the institution,
- seek to meet its annual *Reaching Higher* target for increasing the percentage of all full and part-time students undertaking some element of their course in Welsh,
- work towards achieving the key impacts and outcomes indicated in the annual plan of the AU/BU Third Mission Strategy.

In the period to July 2011 the University will:

- meet its *Reaching Higher* target for increasing the number of Welsh domiciled full-time HE students enrolled at the institution,

- seek to meet its *Reaching Higher* target for increasing the percentage of all full and part-time students undertaking some element of their course in Welsh,
- achieve the key impacts and outcomes indicated in the collaborative Third Mission Strategy with Bangor University.

4. Risks

The following risks to success in this area have been identified and they will be monitored and, where practicable, managed throughout the period:

- failure to recruit Welsh-domiciled students to a non-metropolitan location,
- lack of increased demand for Welsh-medium provision,
- failure to secure business engagement with academic developments,
- failure to increase externally-funded research grant income.

5. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

To provide a working and learning environment in which there is equality of opportunity and which is free from discrimination and to ensure full compliance with our statutory obligations in relation to all equality strands, i.e. Age, Disability, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race and Religion/Belief.

1. Strategic Objectives

The University aims to:

- comply with legislative requirements,
- continue to embed equality and diversity in all areas of its functions and activities and operate in a manner which provides equal opportunities for all,
- continue to develop a culture in which students, staff and visitors are treated with respect and dignity, in an environment in which a diversity of backgrounds and experiences are valued.

2. Implementation

In order to achieve its objectives, the University will:

- develop and implement activities outlined in its equality policy and monitor their impact,
- provide training for staff in order to increase awareness and understanding of equal opportunities and diversity issues; training to be made available electronically and bilingually,
- ensure that all managers recognise their responsibilities and legal duty to promote equality in their areas of work,
- continue to implement Equality Impact Assessment for all equality strands,
- continue to review recruitment strategies for staff and students in order to increase the percentage of under-represented groups,
- review the Learning and Teaching strategy in order to build an inclusive curriculum,
- review and refine mechanisms to facilitate effective monitoring of equality data,
- report on the status of its equality scheme and action plan, in accordance with statutory requirements,
- identify further means by which legislative requirements and good practice can be disseminated and further embedded within the institution,

3. Targets

During the period to July 2010 the University will:

- complete a full impact assessment exercise with regard to policies,
- develop guidance on good practice policy formulation,
- continue to deliver bilingual e-learning diversity training across the University and embed it as part of the induction and probation process. Review current engagement and deliver hands-on training where required,
- implement a new single Equality Scheme and Action Plan incorporating all six equality strands (Race, Disability, Gender, Age, Sexual Orientation and Religion/Belief) and synchronise reporting activities. The University will work to have the Scheme, Action Plan

and subsequent reports available centrally for both staff and student access,

- ensure that the equality and diversity ethos and values are embedded in the HR Strategy,
- review other initiatives to promote equality and diversity.

During the period to July 2011 the University will:

- embed the single Equality Scheme,
- aim to achieve the targets of the Action Plan relating to the Equality Scheme, including those concerned with widening access for students from diverse backgrounds and increasing the percentage of under-represented groups of staff and students.

4. Risks

The following risks to success in this area have been identified and the University will monitor and, where practicable, manage them throughout the period:

- failure to protect the dignity of our staff and students,
- failure to comply with all relevant legislative requirements and/or University procedures,
- legal action and attendant costs,
- damage to the University's reputation.

6. COLLABORATION

To work in partnership to serve the community, the UK, Europe and the wider world.

1. Strategic Objectives

In order to compete more effectively in the modern knowledge economy and to contribute to the goals of the Welsh Assembly Government's Reaching Higher policy, the University will:

- seek to maintain and develop appropriate partnerships and collaborations with Higher Education Institutions, within and

beyond Wales, which are structural, sustainable and of benefit to all participants,

- maintain and develop links with other institutions and public sector bodies where such links will enhance the University's teaching, research, administration and third mission activities,
- seek to build cohesive links with other Higher Education Institutions within Wales to share best practice and enable future collaborations to be identified.

2. Implementation

In order to achieve its objectives, the University will:

- build on the successful merger of IGER into the University and ensure that collaboration of the recently formed Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences with other AU departments is supported and developed,
- continue to address the strategic goals of the AU/BU Research and Enterprise Partnership, namely:
 - the development of four internationally recognised research centres which build upon complementary expertise at AU and BU,
 - the development of international networks of researchers and stakeholders,
 - the development of further areas of collaboration, building on the establishment of the initial centres, in particular the Biosciences and Environment Alliance (BEA) with Bangor,
 - the development of a knowledge exchange infrastructure which makes a significant and measurable difference to the economy of North and Mid Wales.
- support the development of the collaborative Biology and Environment Alliance between Aberystwyth and Bangor to enhance the research, third mission and teaching activities of both universities,
- continue to expand bi-lateral co-operation with Bangor University, for example, through the Aber-Bangor Skills Centre (see section 7),
- continue discussions with other institutions in Wales, particularly through the St David's Day Group (AU, BU, CU, SU and Glamorgan) to identify additional areas where collaboration would be of mutual benefit and contribute to the priorities for Wales identified by the Welsh Assembly Government,

- engage in pan-Wales collaborations as part of the Collaboration and Reconfiguration agenda, such as the scoping study to establish a Wales Aerospace Institute and the development of a Wales Institute for X-Ray Science,
- support and develop the work of the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD), the Wales Institute for Mathematical and Computational Sciences (WIMCS), the Wales Institute for Visual Computing (WIVC) and the Climate Change Consortium of Wales (C3W),
- engage in pan-Wales collaborations in relation to European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund initiatives,
- engage in the Transformation agenda and enhance links with Coleg Ceredigion,
- continue to develop relationships with CyMAL, the National Library of Wales, Coleg Ceredigion, Ceredigion and Mid Wales NHS Trust, Ceredigion County Council and other public sector bodies, with a view to developing joint training and CPD activities for staff and facilitating the strategic development of lifelong learning,
- consolidate and develop the collaborative Centre of Initial Teacher Training with Bangor University,
- support and develop collaborations with schools to enhance the work of ITT,
- support and develop collaboration with Bangor University in the area of Welsh-Medium provision.

3. Targets

In the period to July 2010 the University will:

- achieve the targets established for the Widening Access Partnership (and see section 3 above),
- achieve the targets established for the Research and Enterprise Partnership, which have been agreed by the Funding Council, including those in relation to:
 - increasing research active staff through the appointment of Chairs, lecturers and research fellows/technicians,
 - developing new research programmes,
 - submitting joint applications for grants from Research Councils.

- achieve the targets established for the new collaborative Centre of Initial Teacher Training with Bangor University as detailed in the Reconfiguration Plan submitted to HEFCW,
- support the development of and submission of one additional application to the HEFCW Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund,
- enhance the agreement 'Working in Partnership' with Coleg Ceredigion.

In the period to July 2011 the University will:

- following the merger with IGER, and in collaboration with Bangor, establish a world-class research alliance in the biological, life and environmental sciences (BEA) and achieve the targets agreed with HEFCW and the Welsh Assembly Government,
- achieve the targets for the Research and Enterprise Partnership as agreed with HEFCW, including:
 - increasing external research income in line with the targets set for each of the research centres involved in the partnership,
 - increasing enterprise income,
 - delivery of an entrepreneurship programme to be embedded in the curriculum,
 - establishment of new CPD training areas to increase CPD provision for Welsh businesses,
 - promotion of Alumni networks,
- contribute to meeting the targets identified in the other Reconfiguration and Collaboration partnerships in which it is involved.

4. Risks

The following risks to success in this area have been identified and the University will monitor and, where practicable, manage them throughout the period:

- failure to identify areas offering potential for future collaboration,
- failure to deliver all the objectives of the AU/BU Research and Enterprise Partnership,
- failure to fully capitalise on the potential benefits of the merger of IGER and the creation of IBERS and the Biosciences and Environment Alliance with Bangor,

- failure to generate sufficient resources to sustain our collaborative activities,
- changes in government policy impacting upon the viability of some collaborative activities,
- changes affecting members of our Widening Access Partnership which will impact on the overall structure of the Partnership.

7. PARTNERSHIP WITH INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE

To maintain close partnerships with private and public sector employers and to respond to the changing needs of society for skilled, educated and employable graduates, equipping graduates with the high level skills and flexibility required in a rapidly changing knowledge economy and contributing to both regional and national wealth creation and economic development.

1. Strategic Objectives

Mindful of its special responsibility to fulfil the needs of its region and Wales, the University seeks to:

- contribute to regional and national wealth creation and economic development through collaborative activities with commercial, industrial, professional and public sector organisations,
- maintain and develop close partnerships with industry and employers,
- respond to the needs of students and employers by equipping graduates with the high level skills and flexibility needed in the modern economy,
- contribute to the achievement of UK and Wales Government policy objectives to develop a skilled workforce by continuing to widen access to education and facilities via a variety of lifelong learning programmes,
- provide entrepreneurship training for academics and graduates enabling them to develop their entrepreneurial talents and business aspirations.

2. Implementation

In order to achieve this, the University will:

- facilitate curriculum developments which take account of the needs of commerce, industry and the professions and the employability of graduates,
- support the work of the Careers Advisory Service in securing work placements for students and addressing employability issues,
- strengthen research-based links with private and public sectors, including collaborative research studentships,
- encourage increased departmental collaboration with relevant Sector Skills Councils, professional organisations and employers,
- continue to develop the University's Third Mission Strategy in collaboration with Bangor University, and monitor performance against the economic performance indicators established for each of the Key Impacts and Outcomes identified in the Strategy,
- maximise the commercial and knowledge transfer outcomes of the AU/BU Research and Enterprise Partnership,
- increase industry research to strengthen the international research excellence of AU and provide new technologies and innovation for established and new businesses,
- increase income from consultancy support for businesses in Wales and the UK,
- increase licensing income and transfer technology into businesses, providing innovation and competitive advantage,
- continue to establish innovative spin out companies in Mid Wales,
- develop entrepreneurship by providing mentoring for graduates exploring business ventures, Entrepreneurship Scholarships to support new business ventures and support for the Crisalis Enterprise Network.

3. Targets

In the period to July 2010 the University will:

- achieve the key impacts and outcomes indicated in the Third Mission Strategy:
 - improved success rate of graduates,
 - development of an entrepreneurial culture in Welsh businesses,

- increased levels of research and development in Wales involving business investment,
- improved business access to consultancy services,
- establishment of a steady stream of new business start-ups.
- collaborate with Bangor and Swansea Universities to deliver the objectives of the Welsh Assembly A4B project, to enhance IP capture and increase invention disclosure rates,
- collaborate with Bangor to deliver the objectives of the Aber-Bangor Skills Centre,
- increase knowledge transfer income by at least 5% per annum,
- increase license income by 50% over 2004/05 levels,
- establish four new start-up companies.

In the period to July 2011 the University will:

- deliver the targets incorporated in the revised AU/BU Third Mission Strategy for 2007/08 – 2009/10 which include:
 - the development of an Aber-Bangor Skills Centre,
 - generating £3m additional KT income and developing new KTPs,
 - engaging in strategic collaborations on ESF and ERDF convergence projects with (in particular) Bangor and Swansea Universities, raising at least £20m EU funding for AU,
 - in collaboration with Bangor University enhancing CPD provision in mid and north Wales, providing entrepreneurship scholarships for Aberystwyth graduates,
 - increasing contract research income by at least £700k.

4. Risks

The following risks to success in this area have been identified and the University will monitor and, where practicable, manage them throughout the period:

- failure to deliver the objectives of the Aber-Bangor Skills Centre,
- failure to deliver the objectives of the A4B bid,
- failure to obtain sufficient resources to enable the delivery of elements of the strategy,
- failure to persuade a range of industrial contacts of the benefits of collaboration,
- increased competition from private sector providers with lower costs,

- unrealistic expectations of what we can deliver, given our location and other competing claims on our limited resources.

8. TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

To make effective use of new technology to further our aims in teaching and research.

1. Strategic Objectives

The University aims to:

- implement the plans detailed in its five year Capital Investment Strategy to enable its researchers to design, purchase and develop specialised, bespoke equipment for research developments and ensure a sustainable research and teaching infrastructure,
- provide access to the information resources, learning technologies and communication systems that are integral to the achievement of excellence in teaching and learning, the creation of first class scholarship and research and the efficient conduct of University business,
- promote excellence in teaching, learning and research by providing staff and students with the information and IT and other technological resources they need to achieve their academic and educational objectives,
- enhance the quality of learning and teaching by facilitating the uptake and effective use of new learning technologies and pedagogies and by supporting access to learning materials and information resources that meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population,
- support achievement of the AU research strategy by providing researchers with the ICT and capital infrastructure and facilities necessary for the conduct of research of the highest academic standard,
- promote good governance and organisational efficiency by providing technical development and support for principal administrative systems as well as technological solutions and other specialist expertise designed to assist in the efficient management and administration of the University's principal business processes.

2. Implementation

In support of these aims, the University will:

- provide members of the University with access to the network infrastructure, modern IT and telephony systems and information resources capable of sustaining world class research, innovative teaching and efficient business processes,
- ensure that all University campuses, sites and buildings have high speed broadband connections and computing power sufficient to sustain cutting edge research, including the IBERS facilities at Plas Gogerddan,
- provide students with ready, reliable and robust access to computing and network services through the provision of high specification public access PCs, internet connections in residences and ubiquitous wireless networks,
- facilitate and promote innovative teaching and learning methods, including technology enhanced learning methods that improve the quality and effectiveness of learning as well as collaborative communication and social networking technologies,
- respond to increasing demand for access to electronic resources by increasing the number of subscriptions to digital resource packages where resources allow, improving user interfaces and reviewing methods of resource allocation,
- build on existing information literacy and ICT training provision by providing training and awareness raising programmes designed to enable staff and students to exploit the latest e-resources, software applications, new learning technologies and mobile communication devices to their full potential,
- enable researchers to disseminate their research outputs and the University to showcase its intellectual assets by further developing CADAIR, the institutional digital repository, and by promoting and supporting the deposit of electronic theses, research publications and data,
- continue to develop and upgrade core management information systems as required with a view to enhancing functionality, improving system reliability, maintaining data integrity and strengthening security and disaster recovery procedures,
- utilise the strengths of information networks to improve the management, preservation and dissemination of information as a means of improving organisational efficiency, internal communication and institutional competitiveness,

- take the opportunity provided by the definition of a new 10 year Estate Strategy to review and plan for the future enhancement of the physical environment within which ICT services are offered, including library buildings, learning spaces and public workstation facilities used for teaching purposes.

3. Targets

In the period to July 2010 the University will:

- take the opportunity provided by the appointment of a new Director of Information Services to review strategic objectives and to adopt a new Information Services Strategic Plan covering the three years from September 2009,
- devise and implement detailed operational plans for each of Information Services' four divisions for the period August 2009 to July 2010, listing in each the detailed practical measures that will be taken to address strategic objectives and the specific priorities identified above,
- allocate and use scarce budgetary resources in such a way as to enable Information Services to maximise its contribution to the achievement of University strategic objectives,
- undertake preparatory analyses and investigations in readiness for the upgrading of ICT accommodation and facilities envisaged in the AU Estate Strategy.

In the period to July 2011 the University will:

- review and update strategic plans and priorities for Information Services in light of emerging user needs and the rapidly changing information environment,
- devise and deliver new operational planning targets for Information Services reflecting institutional priorities for the 2010/2011 academic year,
- ensure that in difficult financial circumstances funds allocated to Information Services are adequate and used in the most efficient and effective manner in support of the University mission,
- continue to plan and implement initiatives as the Estate Strategy unfolds that will enhance the student learning experience and provide researchers with first class ICT facilities and resources.

4. Risks

The University will continue to work to minimise the risks which accompany innovation in this fast-moving area through careful procurement and design of equipment to ensure that it is fit for purpose, through staff and student training and through maintenance and planning. The following risks to success in this area have been identified and the University will monitor and manage them throughout the period:

- failure to secure sufficient funding to update obsolete and ageing equipment,
- failure to train new staff or retrain existing staff in the use of highly technical or bespoke equipment,
- failure to meet the requirements for digital and computerised information in research and teaching placing greater pressure on the available services,
- network disruption which is largely beyond the University's control.

9. SUSTAINABILITY AND FINANCIAL AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

To make the optimum use of all our assets, human, physical and financial to maximise income from a wide range of sources and to manage our affairs efficiently so as to maintain our financial stability and to sustain our future growth and development.

Operating within a financial climate which is subject to considerable change, the University will continue to seek to manage its resources carefully and proactively to ensure that it is able to sustain its core activities and invest in future developments.

1. Strategic Objectives

The University aims to:

- ensure that all financial indicators are sound and that the financial position is resilient and sustainable,
- pursue new income streams in the context of careful assessment of commitments,
- increase income, through, for example:

- developing student recruitment, including that of international students,
- increasing research grants and contracts,
- careful management of endowments,
- improving alumni activity and fundraising from alumni and corporate sources.
- ensure sustainability through the production of an appropriate annual surplus across all activities,
- monitor expenditure on a regular basis and provide clear financial advice to all members of staff in control of a cost centre,
- continue to improve energy management across its residential and non-residential estate and in all its activities.

2. Implementation

In order to seek to achieve its strategic objectives in an increasingly challenging financial environment, the University will:

- monitor performance in relation to the 14 Key Performance Indicator Trigger Metrics provided by the Funding Council as a measure of institutional sustainability under the four key headings – Money, People, Equipment and Buildings,
- monitor its Corporate Risk Management Policy to ensure that it has an effective process for identifying, evaluating and managing all significant risks, and to ensure that the Risk Register is robust and up to date,
- cascade risk management procedures to all operational areas, involving all heads of cost centres,
- improve support for members of staff involved in applications for research grants income through increased dedicated research support (including that provided through the AU/BU Research and Enterprise Partnership), through centrally provided training and through mentoring activities in departments,
- provide high quality advice and support for staff seeking to exploit research through commercial exploitation, knowledge transfer and third mission activities,
- ensure that capital infrastructure expenditure is subject to all necessary procurement procedures as laid out in current legislation, to ensure best practice, legal compliance and value for money for equipment purchased,
- continue to redistribute resources between academic departments consistent with the Resource Allocation System,

- continue to embed the issue of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) within the University's annual Planning Round,
- roll out best practice in issues relating to the ESDGC agenda through the guidance of the appointed ESDGC Champion, and continue to monitor activity in this area across the University,
- implement its Human Resources Strategy, focusing on targets in six priority areas: recruitment and retention, staff development and training, equal opportunities, reviews of staffing needs, annual performance reviews and managing poor performance,
- monitor the introduction of the new pay and grading structure as part of the implementation of the National Framework Agreement on Modernisation of Pay Structures, and continue to work on implementation issues,
- implement the Estates Strategy (2008 – 2018), including the development of a campus masterplan and development and implementation of a backlog maintenance strategy for the whole estate,
- continue to work with the Carbon Trust and implement the University Energy and Water Management Policy in order to improve utilities management,
- implement the Staff Development Strategy and work to ensure that appropriate ongoing training is offered to staff at all levels,
- implement changes to endowment fund management,
- further develop our fund-raising and alumni activities, including through the work of the Development and Alumni Relations Office.

3. Targets

In the period to July 2010, the University will:

- continue to work to achieve the targets established in relation to the Funding Council's 14 Key Performance Trigger Metrics,
- continue to work to achieve the targets established in the University's bespoke set of Performance Indicators;
- develop a campus masterplan and continue to reduce the backlog maintenance on both the academic and residential estates, in accordance with the aims of the Estate Strategy (2008 – 2018),
- consider the outcomes of the Strategic Review of the University's fundraising activities and develop a strategy for increasing the amount of income generated from such activities,

- implement the planned investment and asset management incorporated in the Capital Investment Strategy and continue to review the progress of work included in this strategy,
- implement the revised risk management proposals, involving all operational areas identifying risks *via* heads of cost centres.

In the period to July 2011, the University will:

- achieve an operating surplus of at least £2m,
- implement the key elements of the Estate Strategy (2008 – 2018),
- aim to reduce CO₂ emissions by 10% per student in academic buildings and 5% per student in student residential buildings,
- implement and maintain an environmental management system (EMS) which is certified to ISO 14001.

4. Risks

The following risks to success in this area have been identified and the University will monitor and manage them throughout the period:

- failure to achieve planned student FTEs,
- failure to improve on current levels of research income in an increasingly competitive research environment,
- failure to achieve an appropriate surplus,
- failure to recruit and retain high quality staff,
- failure to achieve its targets in relation to the 14 Key Performance Indicator Trigger Metrics,
- failure to be funded on a competitive basis with HEIs in the rest of the UK,
- failure to manage capital programmes effectively,
- reductions in public funding for Higher Education.

10. GOVERNANCE

To be a responsive, efficient and accountable organisation.

1. Targets

In the period to July 2010, the University will:

- commence the monitoring of institutional performance by Council in line with agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs),
- implement a formal performance measurement system for the Council and its Committees,
- undertake a review of the following services to the University to ensure that the University continues to receive value for money: (1) the procurement of legal services and (2) the procurement of internal and external audit services,

In the period to July 2011, the University will:

- prepare and submit to the University's Audit Committee a Value for Money Strategy, in order to promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness,
- aim to reduce in real terms administration cost per FTE student (as designated by HEFCW) so that it is £3,850 by 2010/11 (subject to review following the creation of IBERS),
- develop and implement the University's Communications Strategy.

2. Risks

The following risks have been identified and they will be monitored and managed throughout the period of the plan:

- failure to appoint new Council members with the appropriate balance of skills and experience,
- failure to maintain good financial health as measured by the Funding Council.

23/06/09