



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH

The University of Bath Strategy 2021-26



Our University
Our Future:
Connected



Our University is an **energetic connected community**, committed to excellence in research and education, embracing the opportunities of today's world and addressing its challenges. Knowledge and experience are connected in the search for understanding and solutions; study and practice are connected through high-value placements and strategic partnerships to prepare excellent students for future success; and students and staff are connected in an inclusive, collegial, ambitious learning community. To **belong at Bath** is to be **connected**, and together to build for our future.





The Edge
Sports Training Building
East Campus
2, 4 and 6 East
East Accommodation
Sports Reception
Squires Hall
Square

West Accommodation Centre
1 to 10 West
Wessex House
Library
South Access Route

Introduction	4
Strategy and pillars	8
Values and how we work	10
Driving excellence in education	12
Driving high-impact research	16
Fostering an outstanding and inclusive community	20
Enhancing strategic partnerships	24
Measuring our success	26
Steps to achieving our ambitions	27

Introduction

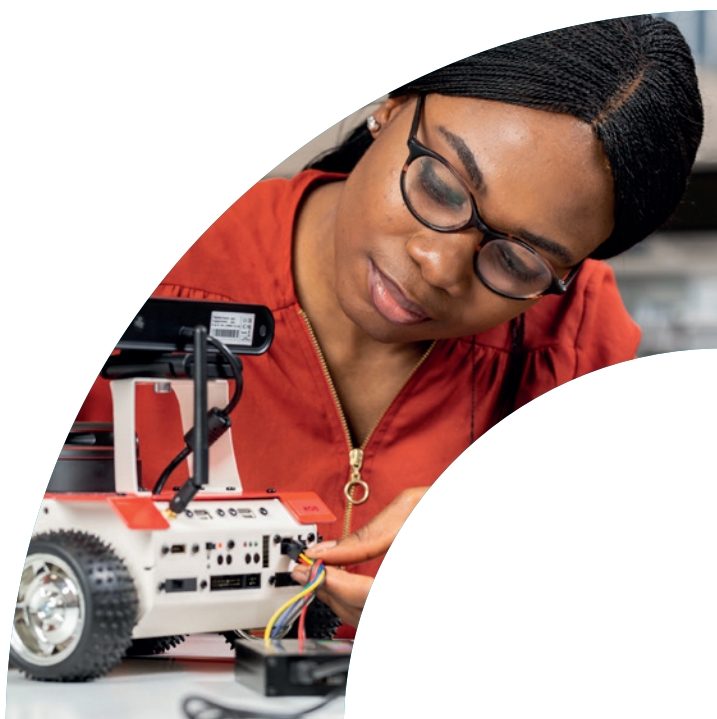
The University of Bath has evolved considerably since 1966, when it was established to advance learning and knowledge by teaching and research, particularly in science and technology, and in close association with industry and commerce.

More than 50 years on, we are proud that the University has grown in both size and reputation, highly ranked in all three main national league tables. Awarded Gold in the first Teaching Excellence Framework, with an excellent track record on student experience and employability, we attract some of the best and brightest students in the world. Engagement with employers remains fundamental to ensuring that our students are particularly well prepared for future careers. Our reputation for applied research, with real-world impact, is prized by our partners and highlighted by the numerous prestigious awards won by our academic faculty. In the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, 87% of our submitted research was found to be world-leading or internationally excellent.

As a 'dual intensive' University, we equally value both teaching and research as core strengths and these will continue to be at the heart of our strategy. Commitment to quality remains central to our institution.

Although much has changed since its establishment as Bath University of Technology, the vision of our founders remains as critical today as it was in 1966. At the outset the description of technology as "the point at which science intersects society" was used to frame the activities of the University. The empowering of a University community to draw on understandings of science and society to address the key challenges of our time remains as important as ever, whether to seize opportunities in advancing digital technologies or to tackle the threat of climate change, or to address health crises.

Through *Our University, Our Future*, a wide-ranging engagement exercise with our students, staff and alumni, we explored the meaning of our mission and our future potential. The feedback affirmed our founding principles, sense of community and current strengths, but surfaced a real desire to progress in response to a rapidly shifting external environment, and an appetite for greater partnership-working, and recognition, at national and international levels.

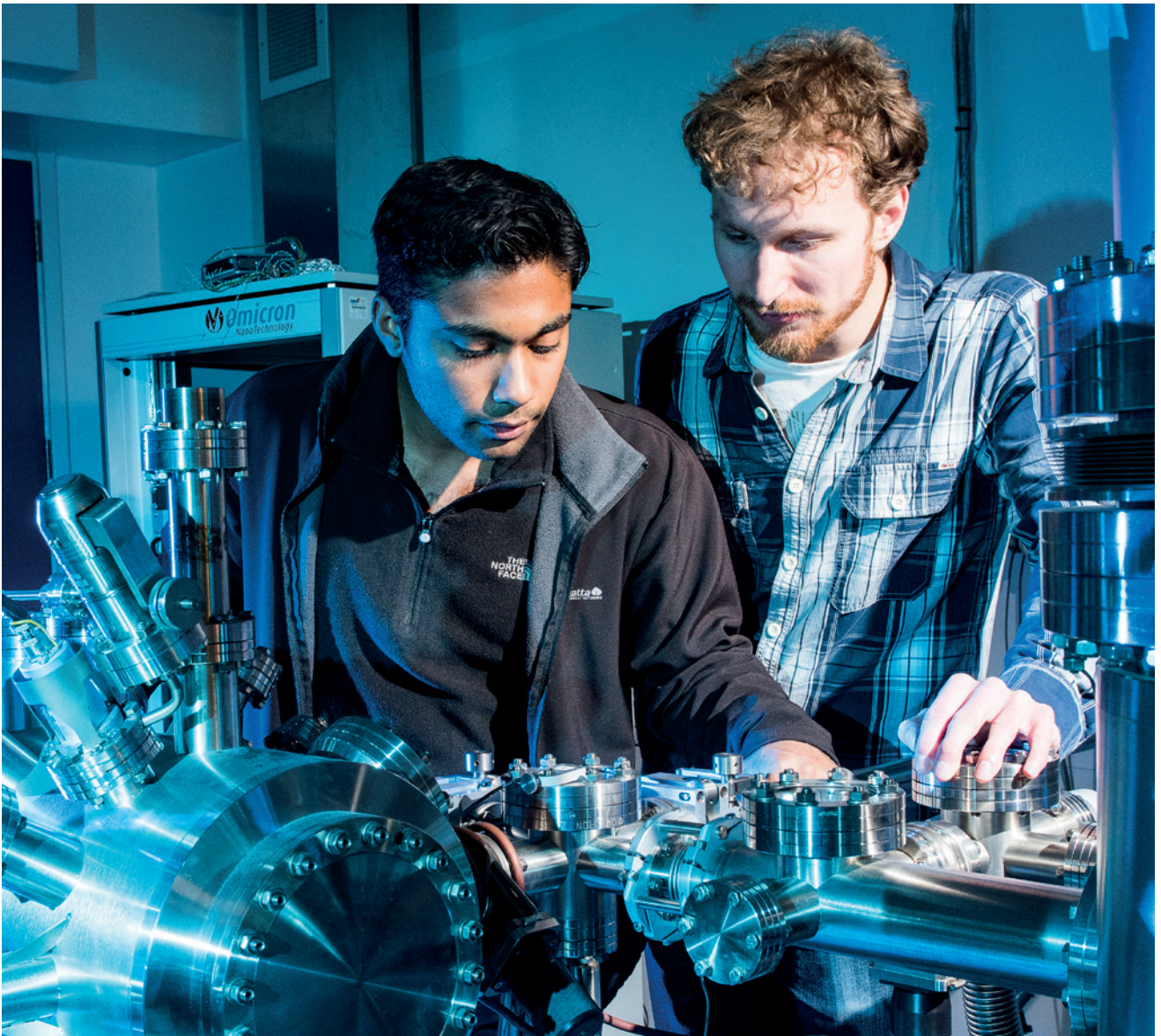


Our Mission endures: to deliver world-class research and teaching, educating our students to become future leaders and innovators, and benefiting the wider population through our research, enterprise and influence.



Our Vision is to be an outstanding and inclusive University community, characterised by excellence in education, research, and innovation, working in partnership with others for the advancement of knowledge, in support of the global common good.





University Strategy and supporting pillars

Over the next five years we will become more agile in our response to the rapidly changing local, national and global environment, consolidating our strengths and advancing our activities in scale and impact.

Building on our distinctive, nationally-leading position in the higher education sector, we will seek to advance our impact by:

- Growing our reputation for University education through **internationally leading courses which are rigorous, relevant and pioneering** and which attract highly achieving students from diverse backgrounds, enhanced by high-value placement and extracurricular opportunities to help students to take their ideas and passions to the next level
- Growing our **research strength** to drive research quality, achievement and impact at international levels
- Growing our identity as a **strong learning community** in which collective endeavour and a culture of care enable the flourishing of all
- Growing our **strategic civic, corporate and international partnerships** to allow us to fulfil our ambitious vision in education, research and enterprise

Thereby we will seek to enhance our global position within the top world-leading institutions. We will do this in ways which respect and support our community, our values, and our environment.



The Strategy expresses our ambitions across four key pillars:

Fostering an outstanding and inclusive community

Driving excellence in education

Driving high impact research

Enhancing strategic partnerships

In developing the University Strategy, we are taking into account the economic, political, societal and technological context and the uncertainties that we will continue to navigate. These include the impacts of the global pandemic and recovery in a post-Covid era, the changing relationship between the UK and the EU and evolving global trade and industry relationships, a transforming digital landscape and the need to respond to the imperatives of sustainability, diversity and inclusion. For Higher Education institutions, both the global and national landscape is rapidly changing, due in part to increased international competition and complexity, evolving policies in the UK, and pressures on university finances. The recent past has underlined the need for increased agility.



Our Values and how we work

Values are at the heart of our strategy for advancement, growth and impact, defining our characteristics as a community, namely:



Our Values must also inform our partnerships, whether these be in building purposeful international collaborations, fulfilling our civic roles, supporting and educating our students, or advancing our research.

We are proud of our contributions and track record in education and research, as evidenced by the recognition of the many achievements of our University community. We are also proud to have centres of expertise which recognise the importance of addressing national needs in education and research for the common good, in collaboration with partners.

We appreciate the benefits of diversity within our community and will seek to ensure that our community is one in which all can feel they belong.

Whilst our roots are in Bath, our reach is global. At our heart we are an inclusive, international community. We believe that global exchange enhances knowledge and enriches experience, and we will continue to seek to attract and welcome warmly students and staff from across the world. Our status as a University of Sanctuary underlines our commitment to supporting students from refugee and asylum backgrounds. Our new strategy seeks to advance our international contributions through our excellence in education and research, and we will seek to build stronger, strategic partnerships to make this possible.

The University is aware of its responsibility to contribute to the global good. We have identified three areas of research strength and focus: Sustainability; Health & Wellbeing; and Digital, all at the heart of the greatest global challenges and opportunities of our time.

We recognise that the climate emergency requires action internationally and locally. The University of Bath was the first UK university to have a Carbon Management Plan and has already implemented successful strategies to reduce carbon emissions, and cut energy and water use. Our research has led to yet greater reductions in carbon emissions through its widespread impact. In recognition of the global climate emergency, the University adopted a Climate Action Framework in 2020. Our Framework seeks not only to reduce our direct and indirect emissions but also to commit to conducting high-impact research for global benefit and to educate students to become future leaders and innovators in the field.

Closer to home, we understand the importance of place and value greatly being part of the beautiful and inventive City of Bath, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and our home for more than 50 years. We aspire to bring not only economic benefit to the local area, but also to share our knowledge and skills, working in partnership with other local organisations and residents whilst being ready to listen and learn. We recognise our actions have local impacts, and want our city to be proud of our University and the talented, caring students who contribute so much, and go on to champion Bath throughout their lives.

Our new strategy will see the University further develop its civic role and partnerships, building on our contributions to the economic, cultural, environmental and social richness of the city and region.

Whilst our roots are in
Bath, our reach is global.



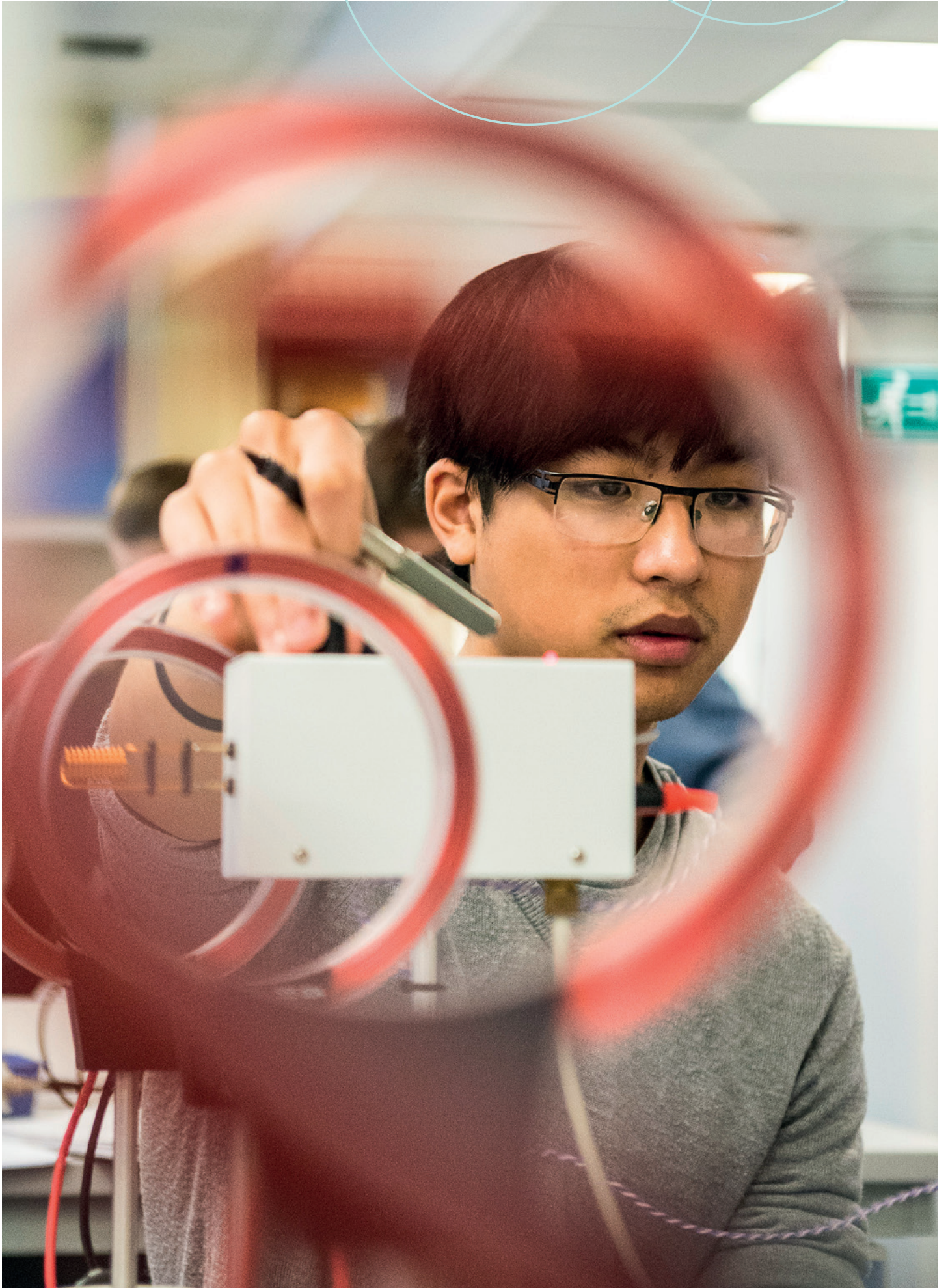
Driving excellence in education

Bath builds from strong foundations on teaching and student experience, receiving a Gold award in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in 2017, and with a strong pedigree in student achievement and experience, sector-leading placement provision and excellent employability outcomes. Over the next five years, we will prioritise maintaining our strong performance in student satisfaction and employability, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, giving this international currency.

Our courses are designed to inspire students of the highest ability irrespective of background to gain understanding and skills so that they succeed in the future. We are proud to have amongst our community outstanding and expert faculty, teaching highly relevant content which reflects the most recent research advances and references the most pressing global issues.

Our placements are a strength. This provision must be nurtured and developed to maintain the 'Bath advantage' of employability for our graduates. We aim to enhance the educational benefit of placement provision, nationally and internationally, through closer integration with courses of study and external partners, and online education. We will seek to break down barriers for students in gaining employment, so that as many as possible can receive the richest possible learning experience both within the University and outside. Beyond placements and study exchange, we will also explore wider employability initiatives that bring real value to our students.





We are inspired by the opportunities emerging technology brings both to enhance existing provision and the ability to reach new and diverse audiences with learning and teaching.



Awarded Gold in the
Government's Teaching
Excellence Framework



Despite our strengths, with fierce international competition and innovation, we must ensure we stay at the forefront of high-quality education, student experience and employability. These actions are key to ensure that we attract the best and brightest students from a diverse range of backgrounds. We aim to be recognised as providing rigorous and relevant courses for high achieving students so that they can have the skills, ability and confidence to become successful leaders and thrive throughout their lives. We will develop our curricula at course, subject, faculty and University level adopting national and international best practice.

To achieve this, we are committed to developing relevant and innovative courses, incorporating new fields. We will seek to bring together disciplines to reflect the evolution of subjects, new educational needs and market opportunities, to allow students to prepare themselves in the best possible way for the future.

With this in mind, we must focus on developing internationally leading courses at pace, with new teaching delivery options and course pathways. Recognising the global nature of education, we will seek new international partnerships for the best possible academic experience.

As a close-knit campus community, with a strong sporting tradition and many excellent facilities, including our library services, we greatly value in-person learning and the holistic experience of a campus-based degree. Our students and staff identify our location in the vibrant, beautiful city of Bath as an important factor enabling them to thrive. This combined experience enables the University to provide students with the opportunities to be well taught, well qualified, and experienced, rounded, and grounded by the time they graduate.

We are also inspired by the opportunities emerging technology brings both to enhance existing provision and the ability to reach new and diverse audiences with learning and teaching. We will build on our existing online provision and will develop sustainable online learning resources to provide quality distance learning and enrich and enhance the efficient delivery of courses, leveraging our recognised areas of expertise.

In building online courses, we will recognise and reflect both our expertise in delivering high-quality student experience, and the high value placed on learning in a community. We will seek to create new learning communities, in line with our core strategic vision, reflecting the importance of peer-to-peer learning and experience, and personal tutoring. In this way, we will encourage life-long learning and widen accessibility both internationally and nationally.

Our community prizes highly the holistic education and experience we provide, working closely with our excellent students' union. We will continually strive to enhance facilities and infrastructure to support an excellent educational and wider student experience at Bath.

To innovate to stay at the forefront of providing a high quality, holistic education by:

- Strategically developing our curricula at course, subject, faculty and University level
- Enhancing the educational benefit of placement provision
- Widening accessibility both internationally and nationally
- Developing sustainable online learning resources to provide quality distance learning courses, and enrich and enhance the efficient delivery of established courses in a manner that encourages life-long learning
- Forging international alliances with relevant and mutually beneficial expertise
- Ensuring that our support practice in terms of advice, care and community-building for our diverse student population is at the forefront of the sector
- Ensuring that personnel, facilities and infrastructure policies and provision support fully the educational strategy

Driving high-impact research

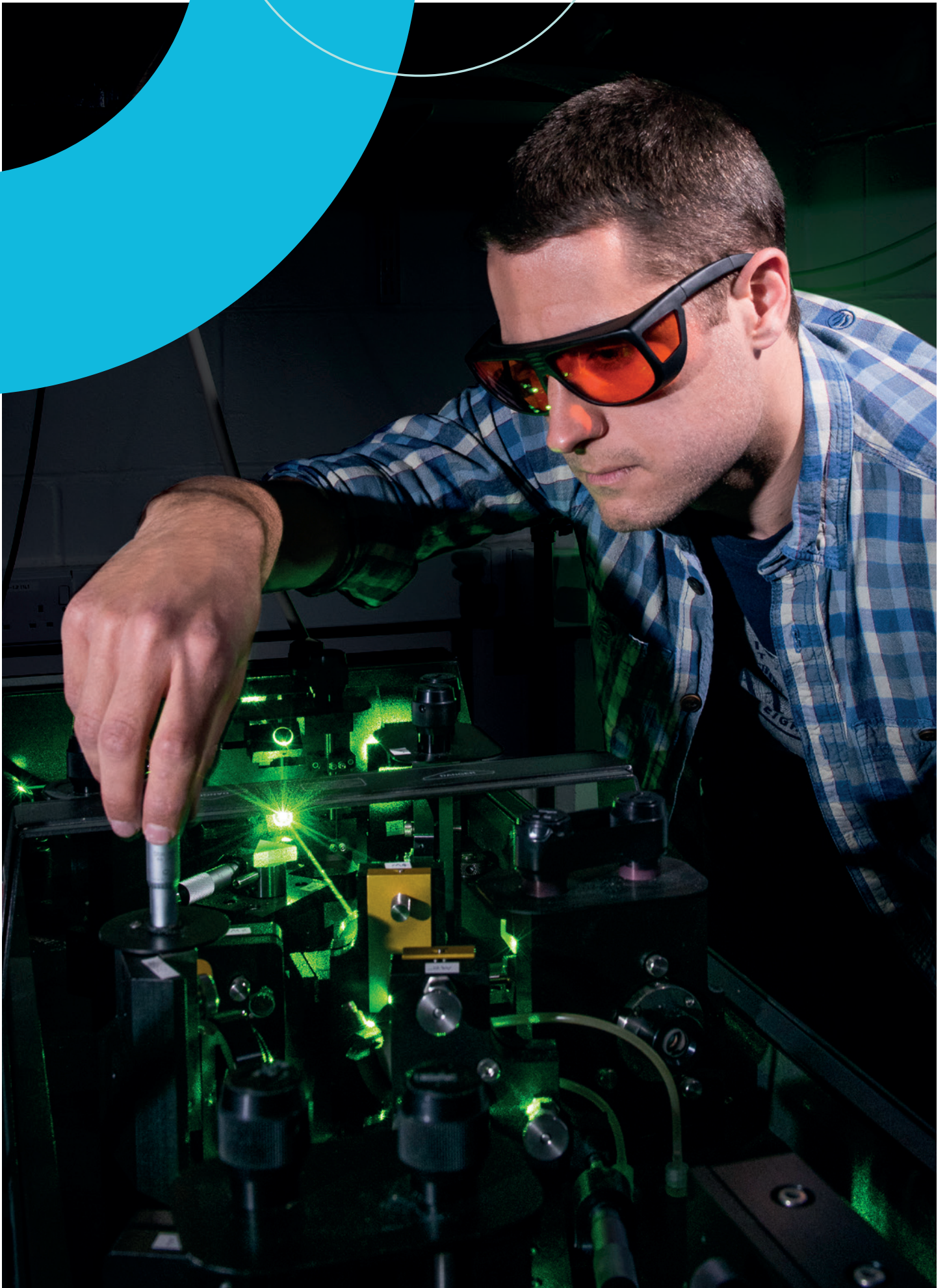
Since the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF), where 87% of our research in this exercise was found to be world-leading or internationally excellent, there has been even wider and deeper engagement in research activities at the University. Our respected research community has been fortified by appointments at every level, recruiting nationally and globally, and including numerous new and outstanding early career researchers.

The University of Bath has a strong track record in interdisciplinary research, the campus having been designed to foster collaboration across our Faculties and School. This has been further strengthened by the significant impact generated by our Institutes and Centres, including the Institute for Advanced Automotive Propulsion Systems, Institute for Policy Research, Institute for Mathematical Innovation, Centre for Sustainable and Circular Technologies and Milner Centre for Evolution, amongst others.

Our new strategy affirms the importance of curiosity-driven research and will grow research strength to drive research quality, achievement and impact. Many of our researchers are already leading in their disciplines; others are ready to further develop their profiles and their international reputations. We will work with our Faculties and School to grow capacity and academic leadership for further success. This will include developing clearer strategies for research at University, faculty and departmental level, more precise benchmarking and goals, strategic appointments, key development of underpinning research facilities, attracting and supporting talented doctoral students and enhanced enabling of interdisciplinary work.

We have identified three primary institutional research themes for collaborative working across disciplines: Sustainability; Health & Wellbeing; and Digital.





To strengthen further our research impact, sharpen our focus and increase our influence, we have identified three primary institutional research themes for collaborative working across disciplines: Sustainability; Health & Wellbeing; and Digital. These existing strengths not only respond to international imperatives such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, but also enable us to align tangibly with regional priorities, the UK's national priorities and the UK Government's Research & Development Roadmap.

Key to achieving our ambition is the generation of increased research income to enable us to innovate, explore new areas and invest in new research infrastructure. We will encourage the development of larger research initiatives to provide better structure to our research profile so that we can use our interdisciplinary research base to tackle the most profound and challenging problems.

Our Royal Charter sets out that the University should have a 'close association with industry and commerce' and our new strategy is an opportunity to renew emphasis on that part of our mission. We will focus on increasing our research impact and target engagement intelligently with business, Government and civil society.

Overall, we will actively engage locally, regionally, nationally and internationally including through partnerships and through public engagement, to ensure that our operating policies, our infrastructure and our support for research help to build towards our strategic objectives, serving to strengthen our culture of research integrity, and enabling our researchers to deliver to their full potential.



To grow research power to drive research quality, achievement and impact by:

- Encouraging the development of larger research initiatives, to provide better structure to our research profile
- Developing clearer strategies for research at University, faculty and departmental level
- Encouraging greater research alliances to enhance research quality
- Actively engaging locally, regionally, nationally and internationally to help to build towards our strategic objectives, serving to strengthen our culture of research integrity, and enabling our researchers to deliver their full potential



Fostering an outstanding and inclusive community

The overwhelming pride in our strong sense of community here at Bath shone through in our engagement exercise, *Our University, Our Future*. We heard, loud and clear, the pride in our supportive and close-knit environment. We also understand how much students and staff value our University operating on a human scale, where our modest size, far from constraining our ambition, facilitates collaboration and the spark of new ideas. We will seek to foster and support that sense of community, our culture of care, and the value it brings throughout our new strategy.

For our staff, we understand that creating a thriving University community entails supporting individual success as well as collective endeavour. We will provide the structures and mechanisms that encourage staff to develop their potential through support, training, and mentoring. Our systems of recognition, reward and development will support individuals to achieve personal success, whilst contributing to our strategic direction.

We want to build on our successes in student experience. To do this we will actively encourage a culture of care and foster a sense of community across our practices. We understand the importance of the wider student experience for all our students. Our exceptional Sports Training Village and the sporting opportunities available to our students at all levels will continue to be a fundamental part of our offer. We will seek to ensure students get the most out of their time at Bath, gaining valuable knowledge, transferable skills and intercultural competencies so they leave us well rounded and with a competitive edge.

We respect student voice and seek to work in partnership with our students' union, valuing constructive dialogue.

Creating a thriving University community entails supporting individual success as well as collective endeavour.



We will encourage a culture that celebrates multiple approaches and points of view.



Our much-valued alumni network will be reinvigorated and we will grow the important role that alumni and other stakeholders play within the University, and indeed the role of the University for them. As life-long learning grows in importance, we will seek increasing opportunities for alumni to contribute to and benefit from the University throughout their lives.

The wellbeing of both our students and staff is of fundamental importance. We have a range of innovative approaches to welcoming and supporting students throughout their time at Bath. Over the lifetime of our new strategy, we will continue to invest in this area; our ambition is that advice, care and community-building practice for our diverse student population is at the forefront of the sector.

For our staff community, we have made real strides in the provision of support, training and resources to support staff wellbeing and we will continue our focus in this area over the next five years.

Reflecting our communities at all levels of our organisation is important and increasing diversity at the University is a priority. Over the lifetime of our new strategy, we will actively attract and welcome the best and brightest talent and potential from a diverse range of backgrounds, both in the recruitment of staff and in our widening participation initiatives to welcome more students from underrepresented groups.

Inclusion is a core value at the University of Bath. An intentional and integrated approach to diversity and inclusion will help prepare students for collaborative work and citizenship in a globally connected society. Through our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy, we will encourage a culture that celebrates multiple approaches and points of view. We will grow our network of people, programmes, initiatives, and tools to help: employees grow and manage their careers; managers and leaders to build inclusive environments; and students to reach their full potential. We will foster both a top-down and grassroots approach, giving us the freedom to address the broadest set of initiatives.



Enhancing strategic partnerships

To live our mission and achieve our vision fully, our community must be outward-facing. An external focus will help us forge new collaborations, benefit from different perspectives and stay connected to a diverse range of communities locally, nationally and globally.

We will become more internationally leading whilst staying locally relevant by building stronger and more focussed national and international partnerships. This will help us to achieve what we couldn't do alone, and enable the knowledge and skills gained to be shared with our local community for mutual benefit.

Our ambition will be to encourage greater research alliances to enhance research quality, and greater proactivity in proposing new collaborative initiatives at local, national and international levels. We will renew our focus on creating strategic partnerships with business and industry, growing support for innovation and commercial activities within the University.

We will forge international educational alliances with relevant and mutually beneficial expertise, to improve our own provision and the profile of our courses internationally.

We will extend our philanthropic activities to embrace new partnerships and initiatives.

Closer to home, our new strategy will see the University further develop its civic role and partnerships in Bath and the wider region, by engaging in continuing education, economic development activities, innovation and community engagement.



We will become more internationally leading whilst staying locally relevant by building stronger and more focussed national and international partnerships.



Measuring our success

The following key performance indicators will enable us to monitor how successfully we are delivering our objectives:

Student profile – we will monitor the diversity of our student population as a measure of the success of our access and participation initiatives.

Student satisfaction – we will monitor National Student Survey (NSS) overall student satisfaction scores as a measure of success in delivering a high-quality student experience.

Student continuation rates – we will monitor student continuation rates as a measure of how supportive our learning environment is.

Graduate outcomes – we will monitor graduate level employment as a measure of our responsiveness to the changing needs of the employment market and the relevance of our programmes.

Research income – we will monitor our total research income as a measure of the relevance, sustainability and peer recognition of our research.

Research students – we will monitor the percentage of full-time doctoral students graduating within four years as a measure of our success in nurturing new research talent and the vibrancy of our research culture.

Research outputs – we will monitor the number and percentage of highly cited research papers as a measure of both the vibrancy and quality of our research.

Research partnerships – we will monitor our research partnerships as a measure of our success in working in partnership, particularly with industry and commerce.

Carbon emissions – we will monitor our carbon emissions as a measure of our progress towards the targets set out in our Climate Action Framework.

Steps to achieving our strategic ambitions

Our strategy was formed during a global pandemic, with perhaps greater uncertainty about the future than many of us have experienced in our lifetimes. Therefore, our strategy provides a high-level framework setting out what we want to achieve, by what means and in what timeframe, with the flexibility to adapt to a rapidly changing world.

The implementation of the University Strategy will be achieved via our ongoing operational planning processes, a range of specific action plans and a programme of institutional initiatives. Implementation will be overseen by the University Executive Board and progress towards achieving our targets will be reported to our governing body, Council, for scrutiny.

The success of the University of Bath, more than ever before, will depend on our ability not only to create new ideas, build on our strengths and address, head on, those areas that we need to improve, but to collaborate, plan and work together to achieve them with a collective sense of purpose and shared values.

One thing which does not constrain us is the strength of our collective ambition, to reach out and connect at every level, in order to achieve greater positive impact locally and globally.



